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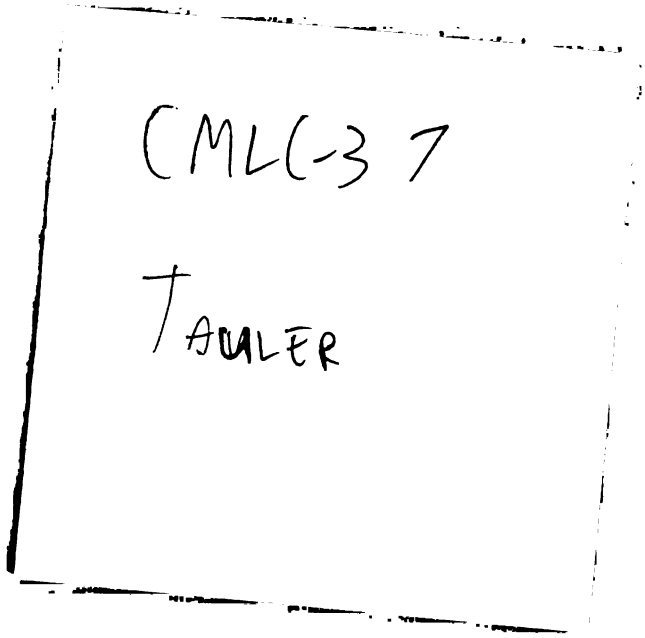
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HISTORY and LIFE

OF THE

REVEREND

DOCTOR JOHN TAULER;

WITH

TWENTY-FIVE of his SERMONS.

LONDON:
Printed by SPOTTISWOODE & Co.
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THE

HISTORY and LIFE

OF THE

REVEREND DOCTOR (JOHN) TAULER

of STRASBOURG; with

TWENTY-FIVE of his SERMONS

(Temp. 1340).

Tranſlated from the German, with Additional Notices of Tauler's Life and Times, by

SUSANNA WINKWORTH.

Tranſlator of *Theologia Germanica;*

AND A

Preface by the Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY,

Rector of Everſley and Canon of Middleham.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN publiſhing a ſelection from the writings of a divine who flouriſhed in an age and under ſocial conditions ſo remote from our own as thoſe of a German Dominican monk of the fourteenth century, it ſeems right to ſtate at the outſet whether the aim which has governed the ſelection is chiefly hiſtorical or devotional. The preſent work was undertaken, in the firſt inſtance, with a ſimply practical object. My earlieſt acquaintance with Tauler's Sermons was made while hearing them read in a family ſervice; and believing, from further ſtudy, that they contained elements of truth not often brought into ſufficient prominence in theſe days, yet poſſeſſing a moſt direct and valuable influence on Chriſtian life, I wiſhed to compile a volume of ſermons for the Sundays and Holydays of the year, ſuch as any head of a family might read to his houſehold, or any diſtrict viſitor among the poor.

To have carried out this idea completely would, however, have involved the omiſſion, in many of the ſermons, of paſſages either too abſtruſe for eaſy comprehenſion, or too much imbued with references to the Romiſh ritual and diſcipline, to be ſuitable for the Proteſtant common people. But ſuch a mutilation ſeemed to me ſcarcely honeſt in the caſe of a writer now to be preſented for the firſt time in a foreign language, and it appeared better therefore to reconcile hiſtorical truthfulneſs with practical uſefulneſs, by reſtricting the ſelection, but giving all the ſermons included in it in their complete form. Had it been my object merely to preſent an intereſting picture of a remarkable man, the ſelection would poſſibly have been ſomewhat different, — certainly much wider. As it is, I have choſen the practical rather than the more metaphyſical ſermons, and have included none which ſeemed to me, in my conſcientious judgment, open to objections as to their moral tendency.

Among ſuch I ſhould reckon ſome tinctured with an aſceticiſm throwing contempt on the affections of ordinary life. Of the *duties* of ordinary life Tauler never ſpeaks diſparagingly. When he ſays that the inward work in the ſoul is more than all outward good works, it is always the outward practices of religion of which he is ſpeaking—attendance in church, faſting, the repeating of prayers, &c.; never of the exerciſe of active benevolence, or

even the performance of minor houſehold duties. It is one good feature of the ſchool to which he belonged, that theſe things are reſtored to their due honour, ſo far as that is compatible with the whole ſyſtem of conventual life. But Tauler does teach that repreſſion of the natural *affections* which is inevitable ſo long as the vital idea of monaſticiſm,—viz., the ſeverance of the religious from the ſecular in life,—is retained. That this ſeverance is falſe and miſchievous, Tauler no more perceived than did the whole body of his contemporaries; but while we have no right to cenſure him for errors which he ſhared with all the men of his age (and which he often diveſted for his own hearers of much of their baneful influence), it is equally unneceſſary to place ſuch doctrine before people at the preſent time. So, too, the ſermons on the Maſs and on the Virgin Mary, while containing many excellent practical remarks, are of courſe baſed on beliefs that would render them unprofitable to the great multitude of Engliſh Proteſtants now-a-days, and I did not deem it needful to inſert them merely for the ſake of preſenting a full view of all that Tauler believed or taught. But neither did it ſeem eſſential to practical uſefulneſs to eliminate from ſermons whoſe general ſcope is rich in Chriſtian inſtruction, all ſuch paſſages as might contain paſſing alluſions to purgatory, tranſubſtantiation, the invocation of ſaints, &c.;

myſtical and figurative interpretations of Scripture, or queſtionable philoſophical ſpeculations, in order that nothing might be left but what Proteſtant Chriſtians at the preſent day actually believe. For private reading it is the leſs neceſſary, as it is often curious and inſtructive to obſerve how Tauler, in many caſes, ſupplies the practical antidote to the hurtful effects of a Romiſh doctrine without in the leaſt ſeeing through the doctrine itſelf; while, ſhould theſe Sermons be uſed, as I earneſtly wiſh they may be, for family reading, it will be very eaſy to omit anything which it might be undeſirable to read to uneducated perſons.

With regard to thoſe not included, the greater number have been rejected ſimply becauſe many of their ideas occurred in the ſermons which I have choſen, and I was anxious to avoid repetition; and among theſe many were ſo good as to render the taſk of ſelection very difficult. A very ſmall proportion have been omitted on account of their Romiſh doctrine; more becauſe of their obſcure myſticiſm, and a few becauſe they contained figures that would ſound coarſe, or at leaſt groteſque and unſuitable for the pulpit, to our modern ears. I believe that thoſe I have given may be regarded, from the abſence of omiſſions and the variety of their ſcope, as furniſhing, on the whole, a correct picture of the mind and faith of their author.

The edition of Tauler's Sermons which I have uſed for my

Tranſlation is that publiſhed at Frankfort in 1826. Among the numerous ancient and modern editions of theſe Sermons, that publiſhed at Leipſic, in 1498, holds the higheſt rank as an authority; but of this, now very rare work, it has not been in my power to conſult a copy; and of the later editions that of Frankfort is the beſt. It is baſed upon an edition publiſhed at Cologne in 1543, and contains one hundred and fifty-three ſermons; only eighty-four of theſe, however, are to be found in the MSS. now extant. Many of the MSS. have, indeed, only portions of theſe eighty-four; but the beſt and oldeſt are alſo the moſt complete. They are two which are in the Straſburg Library, and are moſt probably contemporary with Tauler himſelf, — certainly not of much later origin. The oldeſt printed edition, too, that of Leipſic, in 1498, has only theſe eighty-four ſermons. Theſe are, therefore, all of whoſe genuineneſs we have diſtinct certainty from external evidence. In an edition, however, which Johann Rynmann publiſhed at Baſle in 1521 (probably induced to do ſo by Luther's republication of the *Theologia Germanica*, in 1517, and his recommendation of Tauler's writings to his friends*), forty-two more ſermons are added with the preface:

* Thus he writes to Spalatin in Dec. 1516: "Si te delectat puram, ſolidam, antiquæ "ſimillimam theologiam legere, in Germanica lingua effuſam; Sermones Johannis Tauleri,

" Here followeth the ſecond part of the Sermons of the ſaid " John Tauler, which have been more recently diſcovered, and " collected with great care and diligence. Although there may " be a doubt about ſome of them, let not that offend thee; for " it is certain that they have been written by a right learned " man of his age, and are all baſed on one foundation, namely, " true ſelf-ſurrender and the preparation of the ſpirit for God."

There can be no doubt that ſeveral of theſe are not productions of Tauler; and Surius, in his Latin Edition of 1548, appends the names of the authors Eckart, Suſo, Ruysbroek, in ſeveral instances where he had aſcertained them,—in which the Frankfort Editor follows his example.* The ſtyles of Eckart and Suſo are, indeed, very diſtinguiſhable from Tauler's. That of Ruyſbroch ſeems to me leſs ſo. Finally, the Cologne Edition of 1543, which has been the baſis of all the later editions of Tauler's Sermons, adds twenty-five more, and among theſe, too, ſome by the authors already named have crept in. Still, I cannot ſee any

" prædicatoriæ profeſſionis, tibi comparare potes, cujus totius velut epitomen ecce hic tibi " mitto. Neque enim vel in Latina, vel in noſtra lingua theologiam vidi ſalubriorem et cum " Evangelio conſonantiorem. Guſta ergo et vide, quam ſuavis eſt Dominus, ubi prius guſtaris, " et videbis quam amarum eſt, quicquid nos ſumus."—De Wette, *Martin Luther's Briefe, &c.*, Band 1. Berlin, 1825.

* It is to the Preface of the Frankfort Editor that I am indebted for theſe particulars reſpecting the different editions of Tauler's Sermons.

reaſon to queſtion the ſtatement of the Editor, Petrus Noviomagus, who ſays:—"Having made reſearch in all directions, that I "might obtain the moſt correctly-copied MSS., I have at laſt, in "1542, found in the library of St. Gertrude's, at Cologne (where "the ſaid Doctor had his abode, and was wont to preach God's "word), and alſo in ſome other places, old written books, in "which many excellent, nay, ſome of the beſt of Tauler's Ser-"mons ſtand clearly written, which have not yet been printed "or made public."

Tauler did not himſelf write down his diſcourſes, but they were compiled from notes taken by his hearers, which accounts at once for the fragmentary character of the ſtyle, and for the great number of various readings to be found in the different editions. It is important to bear this circumſtance in mind in judging of the ſtyle of the following ſermons. It ſeems highly probable that the eighty-four ſermons contained in the Straſburg MSS. were publiſhed during his life and received his own corrections; but there appear no adequate grounds for ſuppoſing that theſe eighty-four are the only genuine ones we poſſeſs; for in the numerous places where Tauler preached, many of his ſermons would probably be taken down by ſingle hearers, which in thoſe times of rare and difficult communication, were never brought under the notice of the Straſburg Collector, but, as his fame

ſpread in after years, came to be gradually put into the hands of later collectors by their poſſeſſors, as ſeems to have been the caſe with thoſe of which Petrus Noviomagus ſpeaks.

The Frankfort Edition has not, however, been the ſole ſource of the following tranſlation; for with great generoſity, for which I beg to tender him my warmeſt thanks, Profeſſor Schmidt, of Straſburg, has placed at my diſpoſal a tranſcript made by himſelf, from the moſt ancient manuſcript extant, by which I have corrected thoſe of the following collection, which belong to the firſt eighty-four. In a very few paſſages only have I retained the verſion of the Frankfort Edition, where the ſenſe was ſo evidently clearer and fuller as to indicate a high probability that the later collector had had the opportunity of conſulting fuller notes than his more ancient predeceſſor. This, however, is very rarely the caſe; in general the oldeſt verſion is ſo much the beſt as to give great force to the ſuppoſition generally entertained that it had been corrected by the author himſelf. Of the following collection Nos. 5. 6. 9. 11. 16. 18. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. may be thus ſaid to be, in effect, tranſlated from the Straſburg MS. The Frankfort Editor gives the ſources from which he has taken his verſion of the ſermons, and upon this authority I may mention that Nos. 3. 4. 7. 8. 10. 13. 14. 17. 25. 26. 27. are from the Appendix to the Baſle Edition of 1521; and Nos. 1. 2. 12. 15. 19. from

that of the Cologne Edition of 1543. The ſermon No. 2. is marked as Eckart's in the Frankfort Edition, and No. 4. as moſt probably the production of a diſciple of his, commonly called Eckart, junior. It is, however, somewhat doubtful whether the two Eckarts were not in truth one and the ſame. The Cologne Editor expreſſes the wiſh that "God would anoint some man "enlightened by the Holy Ghoſt to render this precious treaſure "into Latin for the comfort of many who deſire it;" and this wiſh was fulfilled in 1543, by the Carthuſian, Laurentius Surius, the tranſlator alſo of the works of Suſo and Ruyſbroch.

The principal ſources from which my ſketch of Tauler and the "Friends of God" has been derived, are furniſhed by Profeſſor Schmidt of Straſburg, in his *Johannes Tauler von Strasburg;* his eſſay on *Eckart* in the *Theologiſche Studien und Kritiken,* 1839, p. 684.; and his work, *Die Gottesfreunde im Vierzehnten Jahrhundert,* Jena, 1855. I have, however, alſo to acknowledge my obligations to Wackernagel's eſſay on the *Gottesfreunde* in the *Beitraege zur Vaterlaendiſchen Geſchichte* (Baſle, 1843, B. ii. s. 111.); to Neander's *Kirchengeſchichte;* Haſe's *Kirchengeſchichte;* Milman's Latin *Chriſtianity,* &c.

Any one acquainted with the admirable Eſſays of Profeſſor Schmidt, above-named, will perceive how largely I am indebted to him for the facts of Tauler's life, and the account of Eckart;

but will alſo obſerve that my theory of them is, in ſome points, very different from that of M. Schmidt. For my notices of the *Gottesfreunde,* his recent work has furniſhed the whole of the facts; but, again, it is only fair to ſtate that for the light in which I regard theſe facts, I am alone reſponſible.

Manchester: Nov. 29th, 1856.

PREFACE,

BY THE

Rev. CHARLES KINGSLEY.

IT is with great diffidence that I have undertaken to furniſh a Preface to theſe Sermons. It muſt always be an invidious taſk to ſtand toward a far wiſer and better man than one's ſelf in a relation which is likely, at every moment, to be miſtaken either for that of a critic or that of a commentator.

The critic of Tauler, no man has a right to become, who has not firſt aſcertained that he is a better man than Tauler.

The commentator of Tauler, no man has a right to become, who has a ſtrong belief (as I have) that Tauler's Sermons need no comment whatſoever: but that all which is good and eternal in them will recommend itſelf at once to thoſe hearts, let their

form of doctrine be what it may, who have hold of, or are ſeeking after, Eternal Goodneſs.

The hiſtorical and biographical information which may be neceſſary for a right underſtanding of the man and his times, will be found in the Life and the Introductory Notice which are appended to the Sermons; while any notions of mine as to the geneſis of Tauler's views, as to how much of them he owed to divines, how much to his own vital experiences, are likely to be equally unſafe and unintereſting. The Engliſh churchman of the preſent day, enjoying a form of doctrine far more correct than that of any other communion, and reſting on the ſound dogma that nothing is to be believed as neceſſary to ſalvation but what can be proved by Scripture, has (whether rightly or wrongly, I do not here aſk) become ſo ſatisfied with the good fruit, as to think little of the tree which bore it. The Church controverſies, and the metaphyſical inquiries, by which, after many miſtakes, and long ſtruggles, that form of doctrine was elicited from Scripture, are to him ſhadows of the paſt, and "Schoolmen's "queſtions." The element in the ancient worthies of the Church which is moſt intereſting to him is their human ſorrows, temptations, triumphs, with which, as having happened in men of like paſſions with themſelves, they ſtill can ſympathiſe. They cannot, however, now underſtand how ſtrong and

generally juſt an influence thoſe private and perſonal experiences had, in forming the opinions of the old worthies upon Scriptural doctrines, which we have been taught from childhood to find in Scripture, and are therefore aſtoniſhed, if not indignant, that every one in every age did not find them there at firſt ſight.

Thus, ſtanding upon the accumulated labours of ages, we are apt to be ungrateful to thoſe who built up with weary labour, and often working through dark and dreary nights, the platform which now ſupports us. We complain impatiently of the blindneſs of many a man, without whom we ſhould not have ſeen; and of the incompleteneſs of many a man's doctrine, who was only incomplete becauſe he was ſtill engaged in ſearching for ſome truth, which, when found, he handed on as a precious heirloom to us who know him not.

For the many, therefore, it will be altogether unintereſting for me to enter into any ſpeculation as to the ſpiritual pedigree of Tauler's views. How far Philo-Judæus and the Brahmins may have influenced the Pſeudo-Dionyſius; how far the Pſeudo-Dionyſius may have influenced John Erigena; how far that wondrous Iriſhman may have influenced Maſter Eckart; how far that vaſt and ſubtle thinker, claimed by ſome as the founder of German philoſophy, may have influenced Tauler himſelf, are queſtions for which the many will care little; which would require to be

diſcuſt in a large volume, ere the queſtion could not merely be exhauſted, but made intelligible. Such matters may well be left for learned and large-minded men, to whom the development of Chriſtian doctrine (both in the true and the falſe ſenſe of that word) are a ſcientific ſtudy.

But let me expreſs a hope, that ſuch men will turn their attention more and more, not merely to the works of Tauler, but to thoſe of his companions, and to that whole movement of the fourteenth century, of which Tauler is the moſt popular and eaſily acceſſible type, as to a moſt intereſting and inſtructive page in the book of Chriſtian, and indeed of human, thought. I ſay human; for it will be impoſſible for them to examine the works of ſuch men as Erigena, Tauler, Eckart, and Ruyſbroek, any more than thoſe of the later myſtics, whether Romiſh or Proteſtant, without finding that their ſpeculations, whether right or wrong in any given detail, go down to the very deepeſt and moſt univerſal grounds of theology and of metaphyſics; and howſoever diſtinctly Chriſtian they may be, are connected with thoughts which have exerciſed men of every race which has left behind it more than mere mounds of earth. They will find in the Greek, the Perſian, and the Hindoo; in the Buddhiſt and in Mohammedan Sufi, the ſame craving after the Abſolute and the Eternal, the ſame attempt to expreſs in words that union be-

tween man and God, which tranſcends all words. On making that diſcovery, if they have not already made it, two courſes will be open to them. They can either reject the whole of ſuch thoughts as worthleſs, aſſuming that anything which Chriſtianity has in common with heathendom muſt be an adulteration and an interpolation; or, when they ſee ſuch thoughts bubbling up, as it were ſpontaneouſly, among men divided utterly from each other by race, age, and creed, they can conclude that thoſe thoughts muſt be a normal product of the human ſpirit, and that they indicate a healthy craving after ſome real object; they can riſe to a tender and deeper ſympathy with the aſpirations and miſtakes of men who ſought in great darkneſs for a ray of light, and did not ſeek in vain; and can give freſh glory to the doctrines of the Catholic Church when they ſee them fulfilling thoſe aſpirations, and correcting thoſe miſtakes; and in this caſe, as in others, ſatisfying the deſire of all nations, by proclaiming Him by whom all things were made, and in whom all things conſiſt, who is The Light and The Life of men, ſhining for ever in the darkneſs, uncomprehended, yet unquenched.

There is another claſs of readers worthy of all reſpect, who may be diſſatisfied, if not ſtartled, by many paſſages in theſe ſermons. Men well ſkilled in the terminology of the popular religion, and from long experience, well acquainted with its value,

are apt to be jealous when they find a preacher handling the higheſt matters, and yet omitting to uſe concerning them the formulæ in which they are now commonly expreſt. Such men I would entreat to have patience with, and charity for, a man whoſe character they muſt ſo heartily admire. Let them remember that many of our own formulæ are not to be found verbatim in Holy Writ, but have been gradually extracted from it by proceſſes of induction or of deduction; and let them allow to Tauler, as far as is conſiſtent with orthodoxy, Chriſtian liberty to find likewiſe what he can in that Scripture, which he reveres as deeply as they do. Let them conſider alſo, that moſt of thoſe expreſſions of his which are moſt ſtrange to our modern pulpits, are ſtrictly Scriptural, and to be found in the Sacred Text; and that no man can be blamed at firſt ſight, for underſtanding ſuch expreſſions literally, and for ſhrinking from reducing them to metaphors. God has ordained that the Pauline aſpect of Chriſtianity, and the Pauline nomenclature, ſhould for the laſt three hundred years at leaſt, mould almoſt excluſively the thoughts of His church: but we muſt not forget, that St. John's thoughts, and St. John's words, are equally inſpired with thoſe of St. Paul; and that not we, but Tauler, are the fit judges as to whether St. Paul's language, or St. John's, was moſt fit to touch the German heart in the dark and hideous times of the Fourteenth

Century. The important queſtion is—Did Tauler, under whatſoever language, really hold in ſpirit and in truth the vital doctrines of the Goſpel? That can only be aſcertained by a fair and charitable induction, and of the reſult of ſuch an induction I have little fear.

Some, again, whoſe opinions will be entitled to the very higheſt reſpect, will be pained at the fantaſtic and arbitrary method (if method it can be called) in which Tauler uſes Scripture to illuſtrate his opinions. Let them remember, that this was not a peculiarity of the man, but of his age; that for various reaſons, a ſimple, literal, and hiſtoric method of interpretation (which doubtleſs is at the ſame time the moſt ſpiritual) was then in its infancy; that it is by no means perfect yet; and that it is quite poſſible that our great grandchildren may be as much ſurpriſed at our uſe of many a text, as we are at Tauler's.

But there are thoſe—and thanks to Almighty God they are to be numbered by tens of thouſands—who will not perplex themſelves with any ſuch queſtionings; ſimple and genial hearts, who try to do what good they can in the world, and meddle not with matters too high for them; perſons whoſe religion is not abſtruſe, but deep; not noiſy, but intenſe; not aggreſſive, but laborioufly uſeful; people who have the ſame habit of mind as the early Chriſtians ſeem to have worn, ere yet

Catholic truth had been defined in formulæ; when the Apoſtles' creed was ſymbol enough for the Church, and men were orthodox in heart, rather than exact in head. For ſuch it is enough if a fellow-creature loves Him whom they love, and ſerves Him whom they ſerve. Perſonal affection and loyalty to the ſame unſeen Being is to them a communion of ſaints both real and actual, in the genial warmth of which all minor differences of opinion vaniſh, and a truly divine liberality enables them to believe with St. John, that "Thereby know ye the ſpirit of God: every "ſpirit that confeſſes that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh is born "of God."

To ſuch theſe ſermons ſhould be, and I doubt not will be, welcome. If they find words in them which they do not underſtand, even words from which at firſt ſight they differ, they will let them paſs them by for awhile, in charity and patience. Seeing (as they will ſee at the firſt glance) that John Tauler was one of themſelves, they will judge of what they do not underſtand by what they do, and give him credit for ſenſe and righteouſneſs, where their own intellects fail to follow him.

Eſpecially, too, if they be diſtracted and diſheartened (as ſuch are wont to be) by the ſin and confuſion of the world; by the amount of God's work which ſtill remains undone, and by their own ſeeming incapacity to do it, they will take heart from the

hiſtory of John Tauler and his fellows, who, in far darker and more confuſed time than the preſent, found a work to do, and ſtrength to do it; who, the more they retired into the receſſes of their own inner life, found there that fully to know themſelves was to know all men, and to have a meſſage for all men; and who, by their unceaſing labours of love, proved that the higheſt ſpiritual attainments, inſtead of ſhutting a man up in lazy and Phariſaic ſelf-contemplation, drive him forth to work as his Maſter worked before him, among the poor, the ſuffering, and the fallen.

Let ſuch take heart, and toil on in faith at the duty which lies neareſt to them. Five hundred years have paſſed ſince Tauler and his fellows did their ſimple work, and looked for no fruit from it, but the ſaving of one here and there from the nether pit. That was enough for which to labour: but without knowing it, they did more than that. Their work lives, and will live for ever, though in forms from which they would have perhaps ſhrunk had they foreſeen them. Let all ſuch therefore take heart. They may know their own weakneſs: but they know not the power of God in them. They may think ſadly that they are only palliating the outward ſymptoms of ſocial and moral diſeaſe: but God may be ſtriking, by ſome unconſcious chance blow of theirs, at a root of evil which they never ſuſpected. They may mourn over the failure of ſome ſeemingly uſeful plan of their own: but God may be, by

their influence, ſowing the ſeed of ſome plan of His Own, of which they little dream. For every good deed comes from God. His is the idea, His the inſpiration, and His its fulfilment in time; and therefore no good deed but lives and grows with the everlaſting life of God Himſelf. And as the acorn, becauſe God has given it "a forming form," and life after its kind, bears within it, not only the builder oak, but ſhade for many a herd, food for countleſs animals, and at laſt, the gallant ſhip itſelf, and the materials of every uſe to which nature or art can put it and its deſcendants after it throughout all time; ſo does every good deed contain within itſelf endleſs and unexpected poſſibilities of other good, which may and will grow and multiply for ever, in the genial Light of Him whoſe eternal Mind conceived it, and whoſe eternal Spirit will for ever quicken it, with that Life of which He is the Giver and the Lord.

There is another claſs of readers, to whom I expect theſe ſermons to be at once very attractive and very valuable; a claſs of whom I ſpeak with extreme diffidence, having never had their experiences; and of whom I ſhould not have ſpoken at all, were they not juſt now as much depreciated, as they were in paſt centuries rated too highly; I mean thoſe who are commonly called "Myſtics." Doubtleſs, they are paying a penalty for that extravagant adoration which was beſtowed of old upon the

" Saint." Mankind has diſcovered that much of what once, in ſuch perſons, ſeemed moſt divine, was moſt painfully human; that much of what ſeemed moſt ſupernatural, was but too degradingly natural, the conſequences of diſeaſed brain, deranged nervous ſyſtem, or weakneſs brought on by voluntary aſcetiſiſm; and ſo mankind, angry with its idols for having a flaw anywhere, has daſhed them peeviſhly to the ground. Would it not have been better to give up making idols of ſuch perſons, and to have examined patiently, charitably, and philoſophically what they really were, and what they were not? By ſo doing, I believe, men would have found that in theſe myſtics and ſaints, after all bodily illuſions, all nervous fantaſies, all pardonable " confuſions between the object and the ſubject," had been eliminated, there ſtill remained, in each and every one of them, and not to be explained away by any theory of diſeaſed body or mind, one of the very loveliеſt and nobleſt human characters; and on that diſcovery the queſtion muſt have followed, — Was that, too, the product of diſeaſe? And to that there can be, I truſt, but one anſwer from the many. If here and there a man ſhall be found daring enough to aſſert that the moſt exquiſite developments of humanity are grounded on a lie; that its ſeemingly loveliеſt flowers are but fungi bred of corruption; then the general heart of mankind will give their cyniciſm the lie,

and anſwer, " Not ſo! this is too beautiful and too righteous " to have been born of aught but God."

And when they found theſe perſons, whatſoever might be their " denomination," all inclined to claim ſome illumination, intuition, or direct viſion of Eternal truth, Eternal good, Eternal beauty, even of that Eternal Father in whom all live and move and have their being; yet making that claim in deepeſt humility, amid confeſſions of their own weakneſs, ſinfulneſs, nothingneſs, which to the ſelf-ſatisfied many ſeem exaggerated and all but inſincere; they would have been, perhaps, more philoſophical, as well as more charitable; more in accordance with Baconian induction, as well as with Saint Paul's direct aſſertions in his Epiſtles to the Corinthians, if they had ſaid: " The teſtimony of ſo many " iſolated perſons to this fact is on the whole a fair probability " for its truth; and we are inclined to believe it, though it " tranſcends our experience, on the ſame ground that we believe " the united teſtimony of travellers to a hundred natural wonders, " which differ as utterly from anything which we ever ſaw, as do " theſe ſpiritual wonders from anything which we have ever felt."

And, if men are willing (as they may be hereafter) patiently to examine the facts ſtill further, they may poſſibly find, in the very circumſtances which now make them ſcornfully incredulous of " myſtic raptures," a moral juſtification of their reality.

It will be found that theſe "myſtics" are, in almoſt every caſe, perſons who are ſuffering; perhaps disappointed, perhaps lonely, perhaps unhealthy, perhaps all three at once, bereaved of all ſocial comfort, and tortured with diſeaſe.

It is eaſy enough to ſay that ſuch perſons are eſpecially liable to melancholic deluſions, liable to miſtake the action of their diſeaſed nerves for external apparitions and voices; liable, from weakneſs of brain, and the too intenſe ſelf-introſpection which diſeaſe often brings with it, to inveſt trifling accidents with an undue importance, and to regard them as ſupernatural monitions. Be it ſo. Myſtics in all ages have not been unaware of their own dangers, their own liability to miſtakes; and have tried to diſtinguiſh, by ſuch canons as their age afforded them, the falſe from the true, the fleſhly from the ſpiritual. But meanwhile, has this hypotheſis no moral juſtice, and therefore moral probability (which muſt always depend on the amount of moral juſtice involved in any given hypotheſis),—namely, the hypotheſis that to theſe lonely ſufferers more was granted than to the many, becauſe they needed more? That ſome direct and inward "beatific "viſion" of God was allowed to them, becauſe they had no opportunity of gaining any indirect and outward one from a ſmiling world, ſeen in the light of a joyful heart? There are thoſe who have health and ſtrength, health and beauty, wife and child;

a paſt which it is pleaſant to remember, and a future which it is pleaſant to work out. Such find no difficulty in ſaying that God is Love; that God cares for them, and His mercy is over all His works. But if they had lain, and lain perhaps from childhood, in the loweſt deep, in the place of darkneſs, and of storm, while lover and friend were hid away from them, and they ſat upon the parching rock, like Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, beſide the corpſes of their dead ſons, dead hopes, dead health, dead love, as on a ghaſtly battle-field, ſtript among the dead, like thoſe who are wounded, and cut away from God's hand; if they had ſtruggled in the horrible mire of perplexity, and felt all God's billows and waves go over them, till they were weary of crying, and their throats were dry, and their ſight failed them with watching ſo long for their God, and all the faith and prayer which was left them was: "Thou wilt not leave my ſoul "in hell, neither ſuffer Thy holy one to ſee corruption"—If all this—or leſs than this had come upon them; then they might have felt it not altogether ſo eaſy to ſay that God is Love. They, too, might have longed for ſome inward proof, ſome token which tranſcends all argument, that though they go down to hell, God is there; that in their moſt utter doubt and darkneſs, and deſolation, all is well; for they dwell in God, and God in them. They might have longed for it: and God might have been juſt

and merciful in giving it to them; as He may have been in giving it already to thouſands, who by no other means could have been able to face the fearful ſtorm of circumſtances, which ſeemed to proclaim the Devil, and not God, the maſter of the world. Why not let the myſtics tell their own ſtory? It is more philoſophical after all, perhaps, as well as more Scriptural, to believe that "wiſdom is juſtified of all her children."

As for the impoſſibility of ſuch a direct aſſurance, it is an aſſertion too ſilly to be ſeriously anſwered in the nineteenth century, which is revealing weekly wonders in the natural world, which would have ſeemed impoſſible to our fathers. Shall the natural world, at every great ſtep, tranſcend our boldeſt dreams: and ſhall the ſpiritual world be limited by us to the mereſt common places of every day experience, eſpecially when thoſe very common places are yet utterly unexplained and miraculous? When will men open their eyes to the plain axiom, that nothing is impoſſible with God, save that He ſhould tranſgreſs His own nature by being unjuſt and unloving?

But whether or not the popular religion ſhall juſtify and ſatisfy the aſpirations of the myſtic, Tauler's ſermons will do ſo. They will find there the ſame ſpiritual food which they have found already in St. Bernard, A Kempis, and Madame Guyon; and find there alſo, perhaps more clearly than in any myſtic writer, a

ſafeguard againſt the dangers which ſpecially beſet them; againſt the danger of miſtaking their paſſing emotions for real and abiding love of good; againſt exalting any peculiar intuition which they may think they have attained, into a ſource of ſelf-glorification, and fancying that they become ſomething, by the act of confeſſing themſelves nothing. For with Tauler, whether he be right or wrong in any given detail, practical righteouſneſs, of the divineſt and loftieſt kind, is at once the object, and the means, and the teſt, of all upward ſteps. God is The ſupreme Good which man is intended to behold: but only by being inſpired by Him, owing all to Him, and copying Him, can he behold Him, and in that ſight find his higheſt reward, and heaven itſelf.

But there are thoſe oppreſt by doubts, and fears, and ſorrows, very different from thoſe of which I have juſt ſpoken, who may find in Tauler's genial and ſunny pages a light which will ſtand them in good ſtead in many an hour of darkneſs. There are thoſe, heaped beyond deſert with every earthly bliſs, who have had to aſk themſelves, in awful earneſt, the queſtion which all would ſo gladly put away: Were I ſtripped to-morrow of all theſe things, to ſtand alone and helpleſs, as I ſee thouſands ſtand, what ſhould I then have left? They may have been tempted to anſwer, with Medea in the tragedy: —

"Che reſta? Io!"

But they have ſhrunk from that deſperate ſelf-aſſertion, as they felt that, in the very act, they ſhould become, not a philoſopher, but, as Medea did, a fiend. Tremblingly they have turned to religion for comfort, under the glaring eye of that dark ſpectre of bereavement, but have felt about all common-places, however true, as Job felt of old: "Miſerable comforters "are ye all! Oh, that I knew where I might find HIM. "I would order my cauſe before Him, and fill my mouth with "arguments. I ſhould know the words which He would anſwer "me, and underſtand what He would ſay to me!"

To ſuch, Tauler can tell ſomething, though but a little, of that ſtill waſte, where a man, loſing all things elſe, ſhall find himſelf face to face with God, and hear from Him that which no man can utter again in words, even to the wife of his boſom. A little, too, though but a little, can Tauler tell him how he may die to thoſe whom he loves beſt on earth, that he may live to them, and love them better ſtill, in the ever-preſent heavens; of how he may loſe his life, and all perſons and things which make his life worth having, that he may find again all of them which God has indeed created, in that God to whom all live eternally.

There are thoſe, too, who have endured a ſtruggle darker ſtill; more rare, perhaps, but juſt as real as the laſt; men on

whom the "nothingneſs" of all created things had flaſhed, not as a mere ſentimental and exaggerative metaphor, but as a ſtern, inevitable, logical fact; who have felt, if for a moment, that perhaps they and all they ſee and know,—

"Are but ſuch ſtuff
As dreams are made of—"

who have hung, if but for one moment, ſelf-poiſed over the abyſs of boundleſs doubt; who have ſhuddered as they ſaw, if but for a moment, ſun, and hills, and trees, and the faces which they loved, and the ſeeming-ſolid earth beneath their feet,—yea, their own body, fleſh and blood,—reel, melt, and vaniſh, till nothing was left of the whole univerſe but ſolitary ſelf with its eternal malady of thought; who have cried out of the loweſt deep: "What is all which I love—all which "I hate? I gaze on it: but I ſee not it, but a picture on my own "eyeball. I clutch it in deſpair: but I feel not it, but the nerves "of my own finger-tip: if, indeed, eyeball and finger-tip be not, "like the reſt, phantoms of a homeleſs mind, and the only "certain exiſtence in the univerſe is I—and that I at war with "myſelf, ſelf-diſcontented, ſelf-deſpiſing, and ſelf-damned."

That problem Tauler will ſolve for no man; for he will ſay that each man muſt ſolve it for himſelf, face to face with God alone: but he can tell how he ſolved it for himſelf; how

he came to find an eternal light ſhining in for ever in that utter darkneſs, which the darkneſs could not comprehend; an eternal ground in the midſt of that abyſs, which belonged not to the abyſs, nor to the outward world which had vaniſhed for the moment, nor to ſpace, nor time, nor any category of human thought, or mortal exiſtence; and that its ſubſtance was the Everlaſting Perſonal Good, whoſe Love is Righteouſneſs. Tauler can point out the path by which he and others came to ſee that Light, to find that Rock of Ages;—the ſimple path of honeſt ſelf-knowledge, ſelf-renunciation, ſelf-reſtraint, in which every upward ſtep towards right expoſes ſome freſh depth of inward ſinfulneſs, till the once proud man, cruſhed down, like Job and Paul, by the ſenſe of his own infinite meanneſs, becomes, like them, a little child once more, and caſts himſelf ſimply upon the generoſity of Him who made him:—

> "An infant crying in the night;
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

And then, ſo Tauler will tell him, there may come to him the viſion, dim, perhaps, and fitting ill into clumſy words, but clearer, ſurer, nearer to him than the ground on which he treads, or than the foot which treads it—the viſion of an Everlaſting Spiritual Subſtance, Moſt Human and yet Moſt Divine, who

can endure; and who, ſtanding beneath all things, can make their ſpiritual ſubſtance endure likewiſe, though all worlds and æons, birth, and growth, and death, matter, and ſpace, and time, ſhould melt in very deed,—

> "And, like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion,
> Leave not a rack behind"

If there be any to whom theſe ſentences ſhall ſeem merely an enigmatic verbiage, darkening counſel by words without knowledge, I can only beg them not to look at Tauler's wiſdom through my folly; his *siccum lumen* through my glare and ſmoke. As I ſaid at firſt, he needs no Preface. There are thoſe who will comprehend him without comment. There are thoſe, alſo, who will riſe up and follow him, and his Maſter.

The Hiſtory and Life

OF THE

REVEREND DOCTOR JOHN TAULER.

FIRST CHAPTER.

How a certain learned Maſter taught in the city of Straſbourg.

IN the year of Our Lord 1340, it came to paſs, that a Maſter in Holy Scripture preached ofttimes in a certain city, and the people loved to hear him, and his teachings were the talk of the country for many leagues round. Now this came to the ears of a layman who was rich in God's grace, and he was warned three times in his ſleep that he ſhould go to the city where the Maſter dwelt, and hear him preach. Now that city was in another country, more than thirty

How a certain man, being warned in a dream, came to him and heard him preach.

leagues diſtant. Then the man thought within himſelf, "I will go thither and wait to ſee what God is purpoſed to do or bring to paſs there." So he came to that city and heard the Maſter preach five times. Then God gave this man to perceive that the Maſter was a very loving, gentle, good-hearted man by nature, and had a good underſtanding of the Holy Scripture, but was dark as to the light of grace; and the man's heart did yearn over him, and he went to the Maſter and ſaid, "Dear and honoured Sir, I have travelled a good thirty leagues on your account, to hear your teaching. Now I have heard you preach five times, and I pray you in God's name to let me make my confeſſion to you." The Maſter anſwered, "With all my heart." Then the man confeſſed to the Maſter in all ſimplicity, and when he deſired to receive the Lord's Body, the Maſter gave it him. When this had laſted twelve weeks, the man ſaid to the Maſter, "Dear Sir, I beg you for God's ſake to preach us a ſermon, ſhowing us how a man may attain to the higheſt and utmoſt point it is given to us to reach in this preſent time." The Maſter anſwered, "Ah! dear ſon, what doſt thou aſk for? how ſhall I tell thee of ſuch high things? for I ween thou wouldſt underſtand but little thereof." But the man ſaid, "Ah! dear Maſter, even though I ſhould underſtand little or nothing thereof,

How the man loved the Maſter, and entreated him for further inſtruction.

yet I cannot but thirſt after it. Multitudes flock to hear you; if there were only one among them all who could underſtand you, your labour were well beſtowed." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, if I am to do as thou ſayeſt, I muſt needs give ſome ſtudy and labour to the matter before I can put ſuch a ſermon together." But the man would not ceaſe from his prayers and entreaties till the Maſter promiſed him that he ſhould have his deſire.

How the Maſter, being much entreated of the man, promiſed to preach on the higheſt good of man.

So, when the Maſter had finiſhed his ſermon, he announced to the people that in three days they ſhould come together again, for he had been requeſted to teach how a man could attain to the Higheſt and Beſt and neareſt to God that might be reached in this preſent time. And when the day was come, much people came to the church, and the man ſat down in a place where he could hear well; and the Maſter came, and thus began his diſcourſe, and ſaid:

SECOND CHAPTER.

In the following gracious Sermon, twenty-four articles are rehearſed whereby a man may perceive who are the proper, true, reaſonable, enlightened, contemplative men; and what ſort of man it is to whom Chriſt may well ſpeak theſe words: Ecce vere Iſraelita in quo dolus non eſt—*Lo! see a true beholder of God in whom is no guile* (JOHN, i. 47).

The Maſter's ſermon.

DEAR children, I have much to ſay to you in this ſermon concerning thoſe things of which I have promiſed to ſpeak; wherefore I cannot for this time expound the goſpel of the day to you as is my wont, neither ſhall I ſpeak much Latin in this ſermon; for what I have to ſay, I will prove with Holy Scripture [and he ſaid]: "Dear children, I would have you to know that there be many men, who indeed attain to a clear underſtanding and reaſonable judgment, but who do this by means of images and forms through the help of other men, and without the Scriptures. Further, there be found many who, when they mark that ſomething is known to them through the Scriptures, are not therewith content. Such a man is ſtill far from his higheſt

Of the ſoul that is precious in God's ſight, having become that which He would have all intelligent ſpirits to be.

and greateſt good. Dear children, if a man had broken through theſe things, and was become dead to them, and had got above forty ſtages of contemplation, and above the conceptions of our reaſon, whether they come to us through images or forms of ſpeech—if there were a man who had come to this, he would be dearer and more precious in God's ſight than a hundred thouſand men who never get out of their own ſelf, and live after the way of their own chooſing; for to ſuch God cannot find entrance, nor work in their ſouls. This all comes of their own will, and their ſelf-glorifying folly, which takes delight in the dexterity of their own reaſon, in framing and handling conceptions. But thoſe men who while on earth have broken through theſe things, and have given themſelves to God in ſuch ſort that they have died unto themſelves, and have both made themſelves free from all outward forms, and the uſe of ſenſible images in their exerciſes of contemplation, and humbly toiled and preſſed onwards above the images of mere reaſon, as Dionyſius ſays, "the light of faith requires that a man ſhould be raiſed above the apprehenſions of reaſon;"—know, dear children, that in ſuch ſouls God doth find reſt, and a place wherein to dwell and to work when He chooſeth. Now when God findeth thus no hindrance in ſuch a man, He works His own works in him, and

Of the hindrances why there be few of ſuch ſouls.

draweth him truly to Himſelf in Himſelf. Now know that ſuch a man is rare, for his life and ways are hidden from others, and unknown to them, except to ſuch as have a like life, of whom, alas! I fear there be but few. To this ſtate, and this noble perfectneſs, none can come except through boundleſs humility, an unclouded underſtanding, and a clear reaſon; for it has happened ere now that ſome great doctors and prieſts have fallen; and a multitude of rational ſpirits belonging to the angelic hoſts, who perceived nothing elſe in their nature and eſſence but mere reaſon, have erred hence, and fallen everlaſtingly away from eternal truth. And this is what happens ſtill to all thoſe who look to their own reaſon, and want to be and do as God by the light of their ſelf-willed underſtanding. For which reaſon it is profitable and needful to know who are the proper, truly reaſonable, enlightened, contemplative men. Now as far as I can find from Scripture, there are four-and-twenty tokens which ſuch a man muſt poſſeſs.

Of the tokens whereby ſuch may be known.

The Firſt is given us by the higheſt Maſter of all doctors, arts and wiſdom, namely, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he ſays: "Hereby ſhall ye know whether ye be my diſciples, if ye have love one to another even as I have loved you." As much as to ſay, 'Though ye ſhould poſſeſs arts and wiſdom, and high underſtand-

ing, it is all in vain if ye have not withal fidelity and love.' We believe that Balaam was ſo replete with underſtanding, that he perceived what things God purpoſed to do or reveal hundreds of years after his day; but it availed him nothing, foraſmuch as he did not cleave with love and loyalty to the things which he underſtood.

That the firſt and chiefeſt token is love.

The Second mark appertaining to a truly reaſonable, enlightened man is that he muſt become empty of ſelf; and this muſt not make him proud, but he ſhall conſider how he may ever more attain to this freedom, and ſit looſe by all creatures.

Of ſelf-renunciation.

The Third Article: He ſhall reſign himſelf utterly to God, that God may work His own works in him, and he ſhall not glory in the works as being his own, but always think himſelf too mean to have done them.

Of reſignation.

The Fourth Article: He ſhall go out from himſelf in all the things in which he is wont to ſeek and find himſelf, whether belonging to time or to eternity, and by ſo doing he ſhall win a true increaſe.

Of poverty of ſpirit.

Fifth Article: He ſhall not ſeek his own ends in any creature, whether temporal or eternal, and hereby he ſhall attain to perfect ſatisfaction and content.

Of true content.

The Sixth Article: He ſhall always wait on that which God will have him to do, and ſhall try, with

Of waiting on God.

the help of God, to fulfil that to the uttermoſt, and ſhall take no glory to himſelf therefor.

That he muſt give up his will to God's will,

The Seventh Article: He ſhall daily, without ceaſing, give up his will to the will of God, and endeavour to will nothing but what God willeth.

And bend all his powers to work with God.

The Eighth Article: He ſhall bend all his powers into ſubmiſſion to God, and exerciſe them ſo conſtantly and ſo ſtrenuouſly in God, and with ſuch power and love, that God may work nothing in him without his active concurrence, and he may do nothing without God.

Of ſeeing God in all things,

The Ninth Article: He ſhall have the ſenſe of the preſence of God in all His works, at all times, and in all places, whatever it pleaſe God to appoint, whether it be ſweet or bitter.

And receiving all from Him.

The Tenth Article: All his pleaſure and pain he ſhall receive, not as from the creature, but from God; howbeit God ofttimes works through the creature, yet he ſhall receive all things as from God alone.

Of freedom from the creature.

Eleventh Article: He ſhall not be led captive by any luſting or deſire after the creatures without due neceſſity.

Of ſteadfaſtneſs in the truth.

The Twelfth Article: No contradiction or miſhap ſhall have power to move or conſtrain him ſo that it ſeparate him from the truth; therefore hold faſt always and entirely by the ſame.

Thirteenth Article: He ſhall not be deceived by the glory of the creature, nor yet by any falſe light, but in a ſpirit of kindneſs and love he ſhall confeſs all things to be what they are, and from all things draw out what is beſt, and uſe it to his own improvement, and in no wiſe to his own detriment; for ſuch a courſe is a certain ſign of the preſence of the Holy Spirit. *Of wiſdom to diſcern between good and evil.*

Fourteenth Article: He ſhall at all times be equipped and armed with all virtue, and ready to fight againſt all vice and ſin, and with his good weapons he ſhall obtain the victory and the prize in all conflicts. *Of courage and virtue.*

Fifteenth Article: He ſhall confeſs the truth in ſimplicity, and he ſhall mark what it is in itſelf, what God requireth of us, and what is poſſible to man, and then order his life accordingly, and act up to what he confeſſes. *Of wiſdom to know what is expedient.*

The Sixteenth Article: He ſhall be a man of few words and much inward life. *Of moderation,*

The Seventeenth Article: He ſhall be blameleſs and righteous, but in no wiſe be puffed up by reason of the ſame. *Blameleſſneſs,*

The Eighteenth Article: His converſation ſhall be in all uprightneſs and ſincerity; thus he ſhall let his light ſhine before men, and he ſhall preach more with his life than with his lips. *And ſincerity.*

Of ſingleneſs of eye.

The Nineteenth Article: He ſhall ſeek the glory of God before all things, and have no other aim in view.

Of docility and gentleneſs.

The Twentieth Article: He ſhall be willing to take reproof; and when he ſtriveth with any he ſhall give way if the matter concern himſelf alone, and not God.

Of thankfulneſs.

The Twenty-firſt Article: He ſhall not deſire or ſeek his own advantage, but think himſelf unworthy of the leaſt thing that falls to his lot.

That all this is worth nought if he have not true humility,

The Twenty-second Article: He ſhall look upon himſelf as the leaſt wiſe and worthy man upon earth, yet find in himſelf great faith; and above all he ſhall take no account of his own wiſdom and the works of his own reaſon, but humble himſelf beneath all men. For the Author of all truth will not work a ſupernatural work in the ſoul, unleſs He find a thorough humility in a man, and go before his doings with his perfect grace, as he did with St. Paul. But I fear, alas! that little heed is taken to this in theſe our days.

And follow our Lord in all things,

The Twenty-third Article: He ſhall ſet the life and precepts of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt before him for a pattern to his life, words, and works, and without ceaſing look at himſelf therein as in a mirror, that, in ſo far as he is able, he may put off everything unbecoming the honoured image of our Lord.

And count himſelf at laſt not to have apprehended.

The Twenty-fourth and laſt Article is: He ſhall comport himſelf as a man of ſmall account,—as nothing more than a beginner in a good life; and though he ſhould therefore be deſpiſed by many, it ſhall be more welcome to him than all the favour of the world.

Now, dear children, theſe are the ſigns that the ground of a man's ſoul is truly reaſonable, ſo that the image of all truth ſhineth and teacheth therein; and he who does not bear in himſelf theſe ſigns, may not and muſt not ſet any ſtore by his own reaſon, either in his own eyes or thoſe of others. That we all may become ſuch a true image, in thorough ſincerity and perfect humility, may He help us who is the Eternal Truth, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Amen!

THIRD CHAPTER.

How this pious man privately reveals to the doctor in part his own hidden holineſs, and convicts the Maſter that he is ſtill walking in the night of ignorance, and has an unclean veſſel, and therefore is yet a Phariſee.

The man writeth out the Maſter's ſermon, and bringeth it to the Maſter.

WHEN this ſermon was ended, the man went home to his lodging, and wrote it down word for word as the Maſter had ſpoken it. And when he had finiſhed he went to the Maſter, and ſaid, "I have written out your ſermon, and if it be not troubleſome I ſhould like to read it to you." The Maſter replied, "I ſhall be glad to hear it." Thereupon the man read the ſermon over, and then ſaid to the Maſter, "Dear ſir, pray tell me if there be a word wanting, that if ſo I may ſet it down." The Maſter ſaid, "Dear ſon, thou haſt written every word and phraſe juſt as it came out of my mouth. I tell thee, if any one would give me much money for it, I could not write down every word ſo exactly as thou haſt done it here, unleſs I ſet to afreſh to draw it from the Scripture. I confeſs that I am greatly aſtoniſhed at thee to think that

thou haſt been concealed from me ſo long, and I ſhould never have perceived how full of wit thou art, and ſo often as thou haſt confeſſed to me, thou ſhouldſt ſo have hidden thy talent that I have never perceived it in thee." Then the man made as though he would depart, and ſaid, "Dear Maſter, if God will I am purpoſed to go home again." But the Maſter ſaid, "Dear ſon, what ſhouldſt thou do at home? Thou haſt neither wife nor child to provide for; thou muſt eat there as well as here: for if God will, I am minded to preach again of a perfect life." Then ſaid the man, "Dear Maſter, you muſt know that I have not come hither for the ſake of your preaching, but becauſe I thought, with God's help, to give you ſome good counſel." Quoth the Maſter, "How ſhouldſt thou give counſel, who art but a layman, and underſtandeſt not the Scriptures; and it is, moreover, not thy place to preach if thou wouldſt. Stay here a little longer; perchance God will give me to preach ſuch a ſermon as thou wouldſt care to hear." Then the man ſaid, "Dear Maſter, I would fain ſay ſomewhat to you, but I fear that you would be diſpleaſed to hear it." But the Maſter anſwered, "Dear ſon, ſay what thou wilt; I can anſwer for it that I ſhall take it in good part." Hereupon the man ſaid, "You are a great clerk, and have taught us a good leſſon in this

The Maſter is aſtoniſhed at his wiſdom.

The man offereth the Maſter good counſel, but the Maſter, ſeeing he is but a layman, receiveth it not at firſt.

The man ſhoweth him that he himſelf, though he be not learned, is taught of a Maſter who is above all Doctors.

ſermon, but you yourſelf do not live according to it; yet you try to perſuade me to ſtay here that you may preach me yet another ſermon. Sir, I give you to know that neither your ſermons, nor any outward words that man can ſpeak, have power to work any good in me, for man's words have in many ways hindered me much more than they have helped me. And this is the reaſon: it often happened that when I came away from the ſermon, I brought certain falſe notions away with me, which I hardly got rid of in a long while with great toil; but if the higheſt Teacher of all truth ſhall come to a man, he muſt be empty and quit of all the things of time. Know ye that when this ſame Maſter cometh to me, He teaches me more in an hour than you or all the doctors from Adam to the Judgment Day will ever do." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, ſtay here, I pray thee, and celebrate the Lord's Death with me." Whereon the man anſwered, "Seeing that you adjure me ſo ſolemnly, it may be that, in obedience to God, I ought to ſtay with you; but I will not do it unleſs you promiſe to receive all that I have ſaid to you, and all I may yet ſay to you, as under the ſeal of confeſſion, ſo that none may know of it." Quoth the Maſter: "Dear ſon, that I willingly promiſe, if only that thou wilt ſtay here." Then ſaid the man, "Sir,

Then the Maſter prayeth him to abide with him, and to ſpeak whatever is in his mind.

ye muſt know, that though you have taught us many good things in this ſermon, the image came into my mind while you were preaching, that it was as if one ſhould take good wine and mix it with lees, ſo that it grew muddy." Quoth the Maſter: "Dear ſon, what doſt thou mean by this?" The man ſaid, "I mean that your veſſel is unclean, and much lees are cleaving to it, and the cauſe is, that you have ſuffered yourſelf to be killed by the letter, and are killing yourſelf ſtill every day and hour, albeit you yourſelf know full well that the Scripture ſaith, 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.' Know, that ſame letter which now killeth you will make you alive again, if ſo be you are willing; but in the life you are now living, know that you have no light, but you are in the night, in which you are indeed able to underſtand the letter, but have not yet taſted the ſweetneſs of the Holy Ghoſt; and, withal, you are yet a Phariſee." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, I would have thee to know that, old as I am, I have never been ſpoken to in ſuch faſhion all my life." The man ſaid, "Where is your preaching now? Do you ſee now what you are when you are brought to the proof? And although you think that I have ſpoken too hardly to you, you are in truth guilty of all I have ſaid, and I will prove to you from your own ſelf that

The man telleth him plainly of his ignorance.

The Maſter is angered for a moment.

Then the man proveth to the Maſter from his anger that he is a Phariſee, and is yet truſting in himſelf.

it is true." Then ſaid the Maſter, "I aſk for no more, for I have ever been an enemy to all Phariſees." Quoth the man, "I will firſt tell you how it is that the letter is killing you. Dear ſir, as you know yourſelf, when you were arrived at the age to underſtand good and evil, you began to learn the letter, and in ſo doing you ſought your own welfare, and to this day you are in the ſame mind; that is to ſay, you are truſting to your learning and parts, and you do not love and intend God alone, but you are in the letter, and intend and ſeek yourſelf, and not the glory of God, as the Scripture teacheth us to do. You have a leaning towards the creatures, and ſpecially towards one creature, and love that creature with your whole heart above meaſure, and that is, moreover, the cauſe why the letter killeth you. And whereas I ſaid that your veſſel is unclean; that is alſo true, inaſmuch as you have not in all things a ſingle eye to God. If you look into yourſelf, you will, for one thing, find it out by the vanity and love of carnal eaſe whereby your veſſel is ſpoiled and filled with lees; wherefore, when the pure unmixed wine of godly doctrine has gone through this unclean veſſel, it comes to paſs that your teaching is without ſavour, and brings no grace to pure, loving hearts. And whereas I further ſaid that you were ſtill in darkneſs, and had not the true light;

this is alſo true, and it may be ſeen hereby that ſo few receive the grace of the Holy Spirit through your teaching. And whereas I ſaid that you were a Phariſee, that is alſo true; but you are not one of the hypocritical Phariſees. Was it not a mark of the Phariſees that they loved and ſought themſelves in all things, and not the glory of God? Now examine yourſelf, dear ſir, and ſee if you are not a proper Phariſee in the eyes of God. Know, dear Maſter, that there are many people in the world who are all called Phariſees in God's ſight, be they great or ſmall, according to what their hearts or lives are bent upon."

How the Maſter findeth a likeneſs in himſelf to the Woman of Samaria.

As the man ſpoke theſe words the Maſter fell on his neck and kiſſed him, and ſaid: "A likeneſs has come into my mind. It has happened to me as it did to the heathen woman at the well. For know, dear ſon, that thou haſt laid bare all my faults before my eyes; thou haſt told me what I had hidden up within me, and ſpecially that I have an affection for one creature; but I tell thee of a truth that I knew it not myſelf, nor do I believe that any human being in the world can know of it. I wonder greatly who can have told thee this of me? But doubt not that thou haſt it from God. Now, therefore, I pray thee, dear ſon, that thou celebrate our Lord's Death, and be thou my ghoſtly father, and let me be thy poor

He prayeth the man for counſel, promiſing to follow it.

ſinful ſon." Then ſaid the man, "Dear ſir, if you ſpeak ſo contrary to ordinances, I will not ſtay with you, but ride home again; that I aſſure you." Hereupon ſaid the Maſter, "Ah, no! I pray thee, for God's ſake, do not ſo; ſtay awhile with me; I promiſe thee readily not to ſpeak thus any more. I am minded, with God's help, to begin a better courſe, and I will gladly follow thy counſel, whatſoever thou deemeſt beſt, if I may but amend my life." Then ſaid the man, "I tell you of a truth, that the letter and learning lead many great doctors aſtray, and bring ſome into purgatory and ſome into hell, according as their life here hath been,—I tell you of a truth, it is no light matter that God ſhould give a man ſuch great underſtanding and ſkill, and maſtery in the Scripture, and he ſhould not put it in practice in his life."

FOURTH CHAPTER.

How God had wrought a great miracle through this pious man, and how this had come to paſs becauſe God found in him a good and thorough humility.

HEN ſaid the Maſter, "I pray thee, for God's ſake, to tell me how it is that thou haſt attained to ſuch a life, and how thou didſt begin thy ſpiritual life, and what have been thy exerciſes and thy hiſtory." The man ſaid, "That is, indeed, a ſimple requeſt: for I tell you truly, if I ſhould recount, or write, all the wondrous dealings of God with me, a poor ſinner, for the laſt twelve years, I verily believe that you have not a book large enough to contain it if it were all written; however, I will tell you ſomewhat thereof for this time.

The man telleth ſomewhat of his hiſtory to the Maſter.

"The firſt thing that helped me was, that God found in me a ſincere and utterly ſelf-ſurrendering humility. Now I do not think there is any need to tell you the bodily exerciſes by which I brought my fleſh into ſubjection: for men's natures and diſpoſitions are very unlike; but whenever a man has given

How he began with true humility.

himſelf up to God with utter humility, God will not fail to give him ſuch exerciſes, by temptations and other trials, as He perceives to be profitable to the man, and ſuch as he is well able to bear and endure if he be only willing. But this you ought to know: he who aſks counſel of many people will be apt to go often aſtray; for each one will point him to his own experience. But ofttimes a man may exerciſe himſelf in a certain practice which is good and profitable to himſelf; while, if another did the ſame, it might very likely be uſeleſs, or even hurtful to him. The Devil often ſtirs up a man to practiſe great auſterities, with the intent that the man may grow ſick and infirm thereby, or weak in his brain, or do himſelf ſome other injury.

How he tried to follow the example of the Saints.

"I will tell you how it befel me in the beginning. I was reading the German books about the lives of the Saints, when I thought to myſelf, 'Theſe were men who lived on this earth as well as I, and perhaps, too, had not ſinned as I have.' And when theſe thoughts came into my head, I began to exerciſe myſelf in the life of the Saints with ſome ſeverities, but grew ſo ſick thereby that I was brought to death's door. And it came to paſs one morning at break of day, that I had exerciſed myſelf ſo that my eyelids cloſed from very weakneſs, and I fell aſleep. And in my ſleep it

was as though a voice ſpoke to me and ſaid, 'Thou fooliſh man, if thou art bent upon killing thyſelf before thy time, thou wilt have to bear a heavy puniſhment; but if thou didſt ſuffer God to exerciſe thee, He could exerciſe thee better than thou by thyſelf, or with the Devil's counſel.' When I heard ſpeak of the Devil I awoke in a great fright, rose up, and walked out into a wood nigh to the town. Then I thought within myſelf, I had begun theſe exerciſes without counſel: I will go and tell the old hermit all that has happened to me. And I did ſo, and told him the words that I had heard in my ſleep, and beſought him in God's name to give me the beſt counſel he could. So the hermit ſaid, 'Thou muſt know that if I am to adviſe, thou muſt firſt tell me all about thy exerciſes.' So I did, and he ſaid, 'By whose counſel haſt thou done theſe things?' and I answered, 'Of my own will.' Then the hermit ſaid, 'Then know that it has been the Devil's counſel, and thou muſt not obey him any more as long as thou liveſt, but thou muſt utterly give thyſelf up to God; He can exerciſe thee much better than thou thyſelf, or the Devil.' Behold, dear Maſter, thereupon I ceaſed from theſe exerciſes, and yielded myſelf and my doings altogether up to God. For the reſt, dear ſir, you muſt know that by nature I was a very ingenious,

How he erred therein by following his own counſel.

How the hermit taught him to give himſelf up to God.

How he ſought to comprehend divine things by his own reaſon;

clever, good-hearted man; but I had not the Scriptures in my hand, like you, but could only learn to know myſelf by my natural intelligence; and with this ſometimes I got ſo far that I was ſurpriſed at myſelf. And once upon a time, I thought in my reaſon, 'Thou haſt ſuch good parts, may be, if thou ſhouldſt give thy mind to it with all earneſtneſs, thou couldſt attain to comprehend ſomewhat of divine things.' But as this thought came into my head I marked ſtraightway that it was the Devil's counſel, and ſaw that it was all falſe. So I ſaid, 'O thou Evil Spirit, what an impure falſe counſel haſt thou put in my heart, thou bad, falſe counſellor! If we had ſuch a God I would not give a berry for him.' After that, another night, when I was ſaying my matins,* an ardent longing came over me, ſo that I ſaid, 'O eternal and merciful God, that it were thy will to give me to diſcover ſomething that ſhould be above all our ſenſual reaſon!' As ſoon as I had ſaid it I was ſorely affrighted at this great longing, and ſaid with great fervour, 'Ah, my God and my Lord, forgive me of thy boundleſs mercy for having done this, and that it ſhould have entered into the heart of a poor worm like me to deſire ſuch a great gift

and ſaw it to be the Devil's counſel.

* Three o'clock in the morning.

of ſuch rich grace, and I confeſs indeed that I have not always lived as I ought of right to do. I confeſs, moreover, dear Lord, that I have been unthankful to Thee in all things, ſo that methinks I am not worthy that the earth ſhould bear me, ſtill leſs that ſuch an ardent, gracious deſire ſhould ſpring up in me; wherefore my body muſt be puniſhed for my ſin.' With that I threw off my garments and ſcourged myſelf till the blood ran down my ſhoulders. And as theſe words remained in my heart and on my lips till the day broke, and the blood was flowing down, in that ſame hour God ſhowed His mercy on me, ſo that my mind was filled with a clear underſtanding. And in that ſame hour I was deprived of all my natural reaſon; but the time ſeemed all too ſhort to me. And when I was left to myſelf again I ſaw a ſupernatural mighty wonder and ſign, inſomuch that I could have cried with St. Peter, 'Lord, it is good for me to be here!' Now know, dear ſir, that in that ſelf-ſame ſhort hour I received more truth and more illumination in my underſtanding than all the teachers could ever teach me from now till the Judgment Day by word of mouth, and with all their natural learning and ſcience. Now, dear Maſter, I have ſaid enough for this time, as to how it stands with you."

How he was illuminated of God.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

How God converted a heathen in a foreign land through this pious layman, and how that the Holy Ghoſt ſtill to this day diſplays His grace with the ſame power that He ſhowed on the day of Pentecoſt, when He finds fitting hearts to receive Him. Further, how this pious man gives ſtill better inſtruction to the Doctor in theſe matters, and ſhows him that he is a true Phariſee, and brings him to submit to be converted and amend his ways.

The Maſter heareth him gladly.

THEN ſaid the Maſter, "If God give thee grace to ſay ſtill more, I ſhould heartily rejoice in it, for I tell thee in all ſincerity that I have liſtened to thee gladly, dear ſon: now I beg thee for God's ſake do not leave me, but ſtay here, and if thou lack money I will not let thee want for anything, if I have to pledge a book for it." Then ſaid the man, "God reward you, dear ſir: know that I need not your kindneſs, for God hath made me a ſteward of His goods, ſo that I have of earthly wealth five thouſand florins, which are God's, and if I knew where there was need of them, or where God would have them beſtowed, I would give them away." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Then, dear ſon, thou

art indeed the ſteward of a rich man and a great Lord! I am in great wonderment about that thou ſaidſt, that I and all teachers could not teach thee as much by the Day of Judgment as thou haſt been taught in an hour. Now tell me, for I wiſh to hear, has the Scripture proceeded from the Holy Ghoſt?" Then ſaid the man, "Sir, methinks it ſeems impoſſible that after I have ſaid ſo much to you, you ſhould talk in ſuch a childiſh faſhion! Look here, dear Maſter! I will aſk you a queſtion, and if with all your reaſon you can explain it to me, either by the Scriptures, or without the Scriptures, I will give you ten thouſand florins." Then ſaid the Maſter, "What is that?" The man ſaid, "Can you inſtruct me how I ſhould write a letter to a heathen far away in a heathen land, in ſuch faſhion and language that the heathen ſhould be able to read and underſtand it; and make the letter ſuch that the heathen ſhould come to the Chriſtian faith?" Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, theſe are the works of the Holy Ghoſt; tell me where has this happened? If thou know anything of the matter, tell me in what way this came to paſs, and whether it happened to thyſelf?" Then ſaid the man, "Albeit I am unworthy of it, yet did the Holy Spirit work through me, a poor ſinner; and how it came to paſs would take long to tell, and make ſuch a long ſtory that one might write

The man teacheth the Maſter concerning the works of the Holy Ghoſt.

How there was a certain good heathen who prayed God to ſhow him the true faith:

a large book about it: The heathen was a very good-hearted man, and often cried to Heaven, and called upon Him who had made him and all the world, and ſaid: 'O Creator of all creatures, I have been born in this land: now the Jews have another faith, the Chriſtians another. O Lord, who art over all, and haſt made all creatures, if there be now any faith better than that in which I have been born, or if there be any other better ſtill, ſhow it to me in what wiſe Thou wilt, ſo that I may believe it, and I will gladly obey Thee and believe: but if it ſhould be that Thou doſt not ſhow it me, and I ſhould die in my faith, ſince I knew no better, if there were a better faith, but Thou hadſt not ſhown it nor revealed it to me, Thou wouldſt have done me a grievous injuſtice.' Now, behold, dear ſir, a letter was ſent to that heathen, written by me, a poor ſinner, in ſuch ſort that he came to the Chriſtian faith; and he wrote me a letter back again, telling what had befallen him, the which ſtood written in a good German tongue, that I could read it quite well. Dear ſir, there were much to be ſaid on this matter, but for this time it is enough; you are well able to mark the meaning thereof." Then ſaid the Maſter, "God is wonderful in all His works and gifts! Dear ſon, thou haſt told me very ſtrange things."

And how the man wrote him a letter, which brought him thereto.

The man ſaid, "Dear ſir, I fear that I have ſaid

ſome things to you which have vexed you greatly in your mind; it is becauſe I am a layman, and you are a great doctor of Holy Scripture, and yet I have ſaid ſo much to you after the manner of a teacher. But that I have meant it well and kindly, and ſought your ſoul's ſalvation in it, and ſimply the glory of God, and nothing elſe, of that God is my witneſs." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, if it will not make thee angry, I will tell thee what vexes me." Then ſaid the man, "Yea, dear ſir, ſpeak without fear; I promiſe not to take it amiſs." The Maſter ſaid, "It amazes me greatly, and is very hard to receive, that thou being a layman, and I a prieſt, I am to take inſtruction from thee; and it alſo troubles me much that thou calledſt me a Phariſee." Then ſaid the man, "Is there nothing elſe that you cannot take in?" The Maſter anſwered, "No, I know of nothing elſe." Then ſaid the man, "Shall I alſo explain to you theſe two things?" He anſwered, "Yes, dear ſon, I pray thee in all kindneſs to do ſo, for God's ſake." Then ſaid the man, "Now tell me, dear Maſter, how it was, or whoſe work it was, that the bleſſed Saint Katharine, who was but a young virgin barely fourteen years old, overcame ſome fifty of the great maſters, and moreover ſo prevailed over them that they willingly went to martyrdom? Who wrought this?" Then ſaid the Maſter,

The Maſter is vexed that he ſhould be inſtructed of a layman.

Of St. Katharine.

"The Holy Ghoſt did this." Quoth the man, "Do you not believe that the Holy Ghoſt has ſtill the ſame power?" The Maſter, "Yes, I believe it fully." The man, "Wherefore then do you not believe that the Holy Ghoſt is ſpeaking to you at this moment through me, a poor ſinner and unworthy man, and is minded to ſpeak to you? He ſpoke the truth through Caiaphas, who was alſo a ſinner; and know, that ſince you take what I have ſaid to you ſo much amiſs, I will refrain from ſaying anything to you for the future." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, do not do that: I hope, if God will, to be the better for thy words." The man ſaid, "Ah, dear ſir, it vexes you alſo that I ſhould have called you a Phariſee, and yet I gave you ſuch full proof of it that you could not deny it. This ſhould have been enough to content you, but ſince it is not, I muſt ſay ſtill more, and prove to you once again, that I am right, and that you are what I ſaid. Dear Maſter, you know very well that Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſaid himſelf, 'Beware of the Phariſees, for they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's ſhoulders; but they themſelves will not move them with one of their fingers.' Now, dear ſir, look at yourſelf; in this ſermon of yours you have bound and laid upon us twenty-four articles, and you keep few enough of them yourſelf. Again: Our Lord

How the Maſter is proved to be a Phariſee by the teſtimony of Holy Scripture.

ſaid, 'Beware of the Phariſees: whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do, but do not ye after their works, for they ſay and do not.'" Quoth the Maſter, "Our Bleſſed Lord ſpoke theſe words to the men of his own day." The man ſaid, "He ſpeaks them ſtill, now and evermore, to all men. Dear Maſter, look at yourſelf; whether you touch theſe burdens and bear them in your life is known to God and alſo to yourſelf; but I confeſs that as far as I can judge of your preſent condition, I would rather follow your words than your life. Only look at yourſelf, and ſee if you are not a Phariſee in the eyes of God; though not one of thoſe falſe hypocritical Phariſees whoſe portion is in hell-fire." The Maſter ſaid, "I know not what I ſhall ſay; this I ſee plainly, that I am a ſinner, and am reſolved to better my life, if I die for it. Dear ſon, I cannot wait longer; I pray thee, ſimply for God's ſake, to counſel me how I ſhall ſet about this work, and ſhow me and teach me how I may attain to the higheſt perfection that a man may reach on earth." Then ſaid the man, "Dear ſir, do not be wroth with me; but I tell you of a truth that ſuch counſel is ſcarcely to be given you; for if you are to be converted, all your wonted habits muſt be broken through with great pain; becauſe you muſt altogether change your old way of life: and beſides I take you to be near fifty years old."

The Maſter confeſſeth his ſins, and is reſolved to amend his life.

He aſketh inſtruction of the man:

Then ſaid the Maſter, "It may be ſo; but O dear ſon, to him who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour was given his penny the ſame as to him who came in at the firſt. I tell thee, dear ſon, I have well conſidered the matter, and my heart is ſo firmly ſet that if I knew this moment that I muſt die for it, I would yet, with the help of God, ceaſe from my carnal life, and my earthly reaſonings, and live according to thy counſel. I beſeech thee for God's ſake not to keep me longer waiting, but to tell me this moment how I muſt begin." Then ſaid the man, "Dear ſir, becauſe you have received grace from God, and are willing to humble yourſelf and ſubmit, and to bow down before a poor, mean, unworthy creature; for all this let us give the glory to God, to whom it is due, for this grace proceeds from Him, and flows back to Him. Since then, dear ſir, I am to inſtruct you, and counſel you in God's name, I will look to Him for help, and do ſo in love to Him, and ſet you a taſk ſuch as they give children to begin with at ſchool,—namely, the four-and-twenty letters of the alphabet, beginning with A:

Who ſetteth him a taſk to learn.

SIXTH CHAPTER.

This is the Golden A B C which this pious man ſet the Doctor to learn, for the amending of his life, and which, doubtleſs, it were very profitable and needful for us all to repeat many times and oft, and amend our lives thereafter.

The taſk which the man gave the Maſter to learn.



FTER a manly and not a childiſh ſort, ye ſhall, with thorough earneſtneſs, begin a good life.

BAD ways ye ſhall eſchew, and practiſe all goodneſs with diligence and full purpoſe of mind.

CAREFULLY endeavour to keep the middle path in all things, with ſeemlineſs and moderation.

DEMEAN yourſelf humbly in word and work, from the inward holineſs of your heart.

ENTIRELY give up your own will; evermore cleave earneſtly to God, and forſake Him not.

FORWARD and ready ſhall ye be to all good works, without murmuring, whatever be commanded you.

GIVE heed to exerciſe yourſelf in all godly works of mercy toward the body or the ſpirit.

HAVE no backward glances after the world, or the creatures, or their doings.

INWARDLY in your heart ponder over your paſt life with honeſty, ſincere repentance in the bitterneſs of your heart, and tears in your eyes.

KNIGHTLY and reſolutely withſtand the aſſaults of the Devil, the Fleſh, and the World.

LEARN to conquer long-cheriſhed ſloth with vigour, together with all effeminacy of the body, and ſubſervience to the Devil.

MAKE your abode in God, with fervent love, in certain hope, with ſtrong faith, and be towards your neighbour as towards yourſelf.

NO other man's good things ſhall ye deſire, be they what they may, corporeal or ſpiritual.

ORDER all things ſo that you make the beſt and not the worſt of them.

PENANCE, that is, ſuffering for your ſin, you ſhall take willingly, whether it come from God or the creatures.

QUITTANCE, remiſſion, and abſolution, you ſhall give to all who have ever done you wrong in thought, word, or deed.

RECEIVE all things that befal you with meekneſs, and draw improvement from them.

SOUL and body, eſtate and reputation, keep undefiled with all care and diligence. *

TRUTHFUL and upright ſhall ye be towards all, without guile or cunning.

WANTONNESS and exceſs, of whatſoever kind it may be, ye ſhall learn to lay aſide, and turn from it with all your heart.

XT., our Bleſſed Lord's life and death, ſhall ye follow, and wholly conform yourſelf thereunto with all your might.

YE ſhall evermore, without ceaſing, beſeech our bleſſed Lady that ſhe help you to learn this our leſſon well.

ZEALOUSLY keep a rein over your will and your ſenſes, that they may be at peace with all that God doth, and alſo with all His creatures.

All this leſſon muſt be learnt of a free heart and will, without cavilling.

* The letters R and S have been tranſpoſed; the reſt follow the order of the original, in which, as in the tranſlation, the important word of the ſentence is by no means always the one with which it commences. The letters V and W are wanting in the original.—TR.

SEVENTH CHAPTER.

How the Doctor learns this taſk very quickly (though with trouble), and how this layman further inſtructeth him in the ſhorteſt way to the higheſt contemplation; alſo how he was obliged to begin a dying life, and exerciſe himſelf therein till at laſt he prevailed over himſelf. And in this following leſſon lies the true ground of almoſt all the ſermons that ſtand in this book, from which leſſon alſo this Doctor obtained his underſtanding of Holy Scripture, and the perfecting of his life, as ſhall be hereafter ſet forth.

How the Maſter receiveth his taſk from the man, and ſetteth himſelf to learn it.

NOW, dear ſir, take kindly as from God, without cavilling, this child's taſk, which He ſets you by the mouth of me, a poor and unworthy human being."

Then ſaid the Maſter, "However thou mayſt call this a child's taſk, methinks it needs a man's ſtrength to attack it. Now tell me, dear ſon, how long a time wilt thou give me to learn this leſſon?" The man anſwered, "We will take five weeks, in honour of the five wounds of Chriſt, that you may learn it well. You ſhall be your own ſchoolmaſter; and when you are not perfect in any one of theſe letters, and think yourſelf hardly able to learn it, then caſt

aſide your garment and chaſtiſe your body, that it may be brought into ſubjection to your ſoul and reaſon." Then ſaid the Maſter, "I will gladly be obedient."

How he is ſorely ſcourged for not knowing it.

Now when this diſcipline had laſted three weeks, the man ſaid to the Maſter, "Dear ſir, how goes it with you?" The Maſter ſaid, "Dear ſon, thou muſt know that I have received more ſtripes in theſe three weeks about your leſſon than I ever did in all my days before." Then ſaid the man, "Sir, you well know that no man giveth his pupil a new taſk before he have learnt the firſt lines." Then ſaid the Maſter, "If I ſaid that I knew them, I ſhould ſay what is not true." Then ſaid the man, "Dear ſir, go on as you are doing till you know your leſſon right well."

How in ſix weeks he hath learnt the firſt line.

But at the end of another three weeks the Maſter ſent for the man, and ſaid to him, "Dear ſon, rejoice with me, for I think, with God's help, I could ſay the firſt line; and if thou art willing, I will repeat over the whole leſſon to thee." "No, dear ſir," ſaid the man, "I will gladly rejoice with you, and take your word for it that you know it." Then ſaid the Maſter, "I tell thee of a truth it has gone hard with me. And now, dear ſon, I pray thee give me further inſtruction." Then ſaid the man, "I can for myſelf teach you nothing further; but if ſo be that God

willeth to teach you through me, I will gladly do my part, and be an inſtrument in the Lord's hand by which He may work out His purpoſes.

The man foretelleth that he ſhall be brought into great diſtreſs and perplexity;

"Hearken, dear Maſter: I will counſel you in godly love and brotherly faithfulneſs. If it ſhould happen to you as to the young man in the Goſpel, to whom our Lord ſaid, 'Go and ſell all that thou haſt and give to the poor, and come and follow Me,' I will not be anſwerable." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, have no fears on that ſcore, for I have already left all that I have, and, with God's help, am reſolved to go forward, and be obedient unto God and to thee." Then ſaid the man, "Since your heart is ſteadfaſtly fixed to commit yourſelf wholly unto God,

but counſelleth him to be obedient to his Order and ſteadfaſt in his holy purpoſes;

I counſel you in all faithfulneſs that ye be obedient to your Order and your ſuperiors; as it may be that you may be brought into great perplexity if you be minded to go the ſtrait and narrow way, and that you will be hard preſſed and aſſailed, and moſt of all by your brethren. And if this ſhould come to paſs, your earthly feelings will ſeek everywhere for help, and make you call to mind the words in which you pledged yourſelf to God, and alſo other things, with the intent that, if poſſible, they might break away from the croſs; and that muſt not be, but you muſt yield a willing obedience to ſuffer all that is appointed

you, from whatſoever it may proceed. For know that you muſt needs walk in that ſame path of which our Lord ſpoke to that young man;—you muſt take up your croſs and follow our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and His example, in utter ſincerity, humility, and patience, and muſt let go all your proud, ingenious reaſon, which you have through your learning in the Scripture. You ſhall alſo for a time neither ſtudy nor preach, and you ſhall demean yourſelf with great ſimplicity towards your penitents; for when they have ended their confeſſion, you ſhall give them no further counſel than to ſay to them, 'I will learn how to counſel myſelf, and when I can do that I will alſo counſel you.' And if you are aſked when you will preach, ſay, as you can with truth, that you have not time at preſent, and ſo you will get rid of the people." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, I will willingly do ſo; but how then ſhall I occupy myſelf?" The man replied, "You ſhall enter into your cell, and read your Hours, and alſo chant in the choir if you feel inclined, and ſhall ſay maſs every day. And what time is left, you ſhall ſet before you the ſufferings of our Lord, and contemplate your own life in the mirror of His, and meditate on your waſted time in which you have been living for yourſelf, and how ſmall has been your love compared to His love. In

and to follow Chriſt in all humility,

fulfilling his daily duties and meditating on the life and ſufferings of our Lord;

all lowlineſs ye ſhall ſtudy theſe things, whereby in ſome meaſure ye may be brought to true humility, and alſo wean yourſelf from your old habits, and ceaſe from them. And then, when our Lord ſees that the time is come, He will make of you a new man, ſo that you ſhall be born again of God.

and ſo doing he ſhall be made a new man.

"Nevertheleſs, you muſt know that before this can come to paſs, you muſt ſell all that you have, and humbly yield it up to God, that you may truly make Him your end, and give up to Him all that you poſſeſs in your carnal pride, whether through the Scriptures or without; or whatever it be, whereby you might reap honour in this world, or in the which you may aforetime have taken pleaſure or delight, you muſt let it all go, and, with Mary Magdalene, fall down at Chriſt's feet, and earneſtly ſtrive to enter on a new courſe. And ſo doing, without doubt, the Eternal Heavenly Prince will look down on you with the eye of His good pleaſure, and He will not leave His work undone in you, but will urge you ſtill further, that you may be tried and purified as gold in the fire; and it may even come to paſs, that He ſhall give you to drink of the bitter cup that He gave to His only-begotten Son. For it is my belief that one bitter drop which God will pour out for you will be that your good works and all your refraining from

God ſhall not forſake him, but ſhall fulfil this good work in him.

evil, yea your whole life will be deſpiſed and turned to nought in the eyes of the people; and all your ſpiritual children will forſake you and think you are gone out of your mind, and all your good friends and your brothers in the convent will be offended at your life, and ſay that you have taken to ſtrange ways.

The man foretelleth that the Maſter ſhall be forſaken of all his friends,

"But when theſe things come upon you, be not in any wiſe diſmayed, but rejoice, for then your ſalvation draweth nigh; howbeit, no doubt, your human weakneſs will ſhrink back in terror, and give way. Therefore, dear Maſter, you muſt not be faint-hearted, but truſt firmly in God, for He forſakes none of His ſervants, as you know well from the examples of the bleſſed ſaints. Now, dear ſir, if ſo be that you are minded to take theſe things in hand, know that there is nothing better or more profitable for you at this preſent than an entire, hearty, humble ſelf-ſurrender in all things, whether ſweet or bitter, painful or pleaſant, ſo that you may be able to ſay with truth, 'Ah, my Lord and my God, if it were thy will that I ſhould remain till the Day of Judgment in this ſuffering and tribulation, yet would I not fall away from thee, but would deſire ever to be conſtant in thy ſervice.' Dear ſir, I ſee well, by God's grace, how you are thinking in your heart, that I have ſaid very hard things to you, and this is why I begged you beforehand to let me go,

but telleth him not to be diſmayed thereat.

The Maſter thinking this hard counſel, the man giveth him a ſpace to conſider of it.

and told you that if you went back like that young man, I would not have it laid to my charge." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Thou ſayeſt truly; I confeſs it does ſeem to me a hard thing to follow your counſel." The man anſwered, "Yet you begged me to ſhow you the ſhorteſt way to the higheſt perfectneſs. Now I know no ſhorter nor ſurer way than to follow in the footſteps of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. But, dear ſir, I counſel you in all faithfulneſs, to take a certain ſpace of time to conſider theſe matters, and then in God's name do as God gives you grace to do." Then ſaid the Maſter, "That will I do, and wait and ſee whether, with the help of God, I may prevail."



EIGHTH CHAPTER.

How it fared with the Doctor after this, and how he fell into great tribulation and contempt, till he fell ill thereby; and how the layman counſelled him, and allowed him to help nature with ſome good food and ſpices, and afterwards departed from him.

ON the eleventh day after this, the Maſter ſent for the man, and ſaid to him, "Ah, dear ſon, what agony and ſtruggle and fighting have I not had within me day and night, before I was able to overcome the Devil and my own fleſh. But now by God's grace I have gathered myſelf together with all my powers inward and outward, and ſet my hand to this work with good courage, and am purpoſed to remain ſteadfaſt therein, come weal come woe." Then ſaid the man, "Dear ſir, do you remember ſtill all I ſaid to you when you aſked me how you ſhould begin?" The Maſter anſwered, "Yes, the moment thou didſt depart I wrote down all thou hadſt ſaid to me, word for word." Then ſaid the man, "Dear ſir, that through God you have found this bold heart, rejoices me from the bottom of my ſoul, and I am as well pleaſed as if it had happened to myſelf, ſo

How the Maſter through great diſtreſs and fightings reſolves to begin the good work.

The man is greatly rejoiced thereat.

God be my witneſs. And now in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſet forward." Then the man took his leave, and the Maſter did as he had been bidden.

How his good reſolution brings the Maſter into great tribulation of mind and ſickneſs of body.

Now it came to paſs that before a year was out the Maſter grew to be deſpiſed of all his familiar friends in the convent, and his ſpiritual children all forſook him as entirely as if they had never ſeen him. And this he found very hard to bear, and it cauſed him ſuch grief that his head was like to turn. Then he ſent for the man and told him how it fared with him; how he was ill in his whole body, and eſpecially in his head. Then ſaid the man, "Sir, you muſt not be diſmayed, but you muſt humbly cleave to God, and put your firm truſt in Him. Know that this account of yours pleaſes me well, and it ſtands well with your life, and will grow better every day.

How he ſendeth for the man, who gives him remedies for his ſickneſs,

"Dear ſir, you know well that he who will walk in the right way, and tread this path, muſt be made a partaker of the ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; therefore be not afraid, but commit yourſelf wholly to God. For know that the ſame thing happened to me alſo. Meanwhile you muſt take ſome remedies while you are in this ſtate, and treat your body well with good food which may ſtrengthen it. A box of ſpices was made for me, and I will have ſuch an one prepared for you to ſtrengthen your head. But you muſt

know that I always gave myſelf up body and ſoul to God, that He might do with them what he pleaſed."

Then ſaid the Maſter, "But thou didſt tell me before that I muſt ſhun good eating and drinking." The man anſwered, "Yes, ſir, that was in the firſt beginning, when the fleſh was yet wanton, but now that it is tamed and obedient to the ſpirit, we may come to its help with remedies, elſe we ſhould tempt God. So long as you are in this ſickneſs, you will be ſerving God to cheriſh your body by allowable means, but not to live diſorderly; that muſt not be. Dear ſir, make God your help, and go forward with cheerful mind, and commit yourſelf to God with true and thorough reſignation, and put your truſt in His boundleſs mercy, and wait for His grace to ſhow you what He will have you to do, and then with His help ſtrive to fulfil that to the uttermoſt, whether it be bitter or ſweet. Further, I beſeech you for God's ſake not to take it amiſs of me, but I muſt go home on account of a very important matter, which I aſſure you in all earneſtneſs I have much at heart; but if ſo be that you could not or would not do without me, ſend into the town for me, and I will gladly come; but if you can bear up without the aid of any creature, that would be beſt of all for you." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, ſay not ſo, for I cannot and would not do without thee for any

and counſels him to truſt in God,

and then takes his leave.

The Maſter entreateth the man to ſtay.

length of time; it would be hard indeed if thou didſt forſake me, for then I ſhould have no conſolation left in the world." The man ſaid, "Dear ſir, I will ſhow you a better Comforter, that is the Holy Ghoſt, who has called and invited and brought you to this point,

The man telleth him of a better Comforter, and how he ſhould not loſe heart,

by means of me His poor creature, but it is His work which has been wrought in you, and not mine; I have been merely His inſtrument, and ſerved Him therein, and have done ſo right willingly, for the glory of God and the ſalvation of your ſoul." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, may God be thine eternal reward! Since it is ſo weighty a matter, I will commit myſelf to God, and bear this ſuffering as beſt I may." The man ſaid, "Dear ſir, ſince you are now under the yoke, and have entered on a ſpiritual life and obedience to God, and have voluntarily devoted yourſelf thereto, you ſhould know how to live diſcreetly and wiſely, and to govern yourſelf aright; and do not let it repent you becauſe you are forſaken of the creatures, but if it ſhould happen that you lack money, or have need of ſome, put a part of your books in pawn, and do not ſuffer yourſelf to want for anything, but by no means ſell the books, for a time will come when good books will be very uſeful, and you will have need of them."

and ſo departeth.

Then the man took his leave and departed from that place, but the Maſter's eyes filled with tears, and he began to weep.

The Maſter is ſorely grieved.

NINTH CHAPTER.

How Doctor Tauler was viſited, touched, and illuminated after a wonderful manner by God, and how the layman came to him again, and admoniſhed him tenderly to begin to preach afreſh, and to exerciſe himſelf in the Holy Scriptures. Alſo concerning a ſtrange event that befell him afterwards, whereby he was ſtill more tried and humbled, yet not without fruit.

The Maſter ſuffereth greatly for two years, and falleth into poverty.

NOW when the Maſter had ſuffered thus for two years, from ſore aſſaults and temptations of the Devil, and great contempt from all his friends, and alſo great poverty, ſo that he was obliged to pledge a part of his books, and withal fell into great weakneſs of the body, and he had demeaned himſelf with great humility throughout;—behold, it came to paſs on the Feaſt of St. Paul's Converſion, that in the night he was overtaken by the moſt grievous aſſault that may be imagined, whereby all his natural powers were ſo overcome with weakneſs that when the time for matins came he could not go in to chapel, but remained in his cell, and commended himſelf to God in great humility, without help or conſolation from any creature. And as he lay in this ſtate

How, lying ſick in his cell

and meditating on our Lord's ſufferings,

of weakneſs, he thought of the ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and His great love that He had for us, and conſidered his own life, how poor his life had been compared to the love of God. Whereupon he was overwhelmed with contrition for all his ſins and all his waſted time, and exclaimed with tongue and heart: "O merciful God! have mercy upon me a poor ſinner, for thy boundleſs mercy's ſake, for I am not worthy that the earth ſhould bear me." And as he was lying in this weakneſs and great ſadneſs, but fully awake, he

he heareth a wondrous voice,

heard with his bodily ears a voice ſaying: "Stand faſt in thy peace, and truſt God, and know that when He was on earth in human nature, He made the ſick whom He healed in body ſound alſo in ſoul." Straightway when theſe words were uttered, he loſt his ſenſes and reaſon, and knew not how or where he was. But when

and is ſtraightway healed in body and mind.

he came to himſelf again, he felt within himſelf that he was poſſeſſed of a new ſtrength and might in all powers outward and inward, and had alſo a clear underſtanding in thoſe things which aforetime were dark to him, and he wondered greatly whence this came, and thought to himſelf, "I cannot come to the bottom of this matter. I will ſend for my friend and tell him all that has happened." So he ſent for the man; and when he was come, the Maſter told him

He ſendeth for the man

all that had befallen him. Then the man ſaid, "It

rejoices me from the bottom of my heart to hear all that you have told me. Dear ſir, you muſt know that you have now for the firſt time received the true and mighty gift of God's grace; and I tell you of a truth that now, for the firſt time, your ſoul has been touched by the Moſt High; and know that, as the letter hath in ſome meaſure ſlain you, ſo it ſhall likewiſe make you alive again, for your doctrine will come now from the Holy Ghoſt, which before came from the fleſh; for you have now received the light of the Holy Spirit by the grace of God, and you already know the Holy Scriptures. Therefore you have now a great advantage, and you will henceforward have a much clearer inſight into the Scripture than you had before. For, as you know, the Scripture ſounds in many places as if it contradicted itſelf, but ſince that you have now, by the grace of God, received the Holy Scriptures into your own heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, you will perceive that all Scripture has the ſame intent, and does not contradict itſelf, and you will alſo be able rightly to follow the pattern left us by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. You ought alſo to begin to preach again, and to teach your fellow-Chriſtians, and ſhow them the right path to eternal life. The time is come now when good books will be profitable to you; for

and telleth him all theſe things.

The man rejoiceth much that the Maſter has been enlightened of the Holy Ghoſt,

and counselleth him to preach again.

The man warneth the Maſter that he will have need of great humility, for the Devil will tempt him cunningly.

know that one of your ſermons will be more profitable now, and the people will receive more fruit therefrom, than from a hundred aforetime, for the words that you ſay now, coming from a pure ſoul, will have a pure and ſimple ſavour. Wherefore, juſt as much as you have been deſpiſed by the people, ſo ſhall you now be eſteemed and beloved by them. But it will be moſt eſpecially needful that you keep yourſelf humble, for you know well that he who carries a great treaſure expoſed to view muſt ever be on his guard againſt thieves. I tell you truly the Devil is in great terror when he perceives that God has beſtowed on any man ſuch a noble and precious treaſure, and the devils will ſet all their arts and wiſdom, and their luſts too, to work, to rob and bereave you of this coſtly treaſure; wherefore look wiſely to your goings, for nothing will ſo greatly help you to preſerve it as utter humility. Now, dear ſir, it is no longer needful for me to ſpeak to you as a teacher, as I have done hitherto, for you have now the right and true Maſter, whoſe inſtrument I have been: to Him give ear, and obey His commands; this is my moſt faithful counſel. And now, in all godly love, I deſire to receive inſtruction from you, for I have, with God's help, accompliſhed the good work for which I was ſent and came hither. I would fain, if God will,

ſojourn here a good while and hear you preach. If God give you to do ſo, methinks it were well that you ſhould now begin to preach again." Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, what had I better do; I have pledged a great many good books, as many as come to thirty florins?" The man anſwered, "Look! I will give you that ſum, for God's ſake, and if you have any of it left over, give it back to God, for all that we have is His, whether temporal or ſpiritual." So the Maſter redeemed his books, and ordered notice to be given that he would preach three days after. The people wondered much thereat, becauſe it was ſo long ſince he had preached, and a great crowd gathered together to hear him. And when the Maſter came and ſaw that there was ſuch a multitude, he went up into a pulpit in a high place, that they might hear him all the better. Then he held his hood before his eyes, and ſaid, "O merciful, Eternal God, if it be Thy will, give me ſo to ſpeak that it may be to the praiſe and glory of Thy name and the good of this people." As he ſaid theſe words, his eyes overflowed with tears of tenderneſs, ſo that he could not ſpeak a word for weeping, and this laſted ſo long that the people grew angry. At laſt a man ſpoke out of the crowd, "Sir, how long are we to ſtand here? It is getting late; if you do not mean to preach, let us go home."

How the man adviſeth the Maſter to begin again to preach.

How on the appointed day a great multitude gather together to hear the Maſter.

But he cannot ſpeak for weeping;

But the Maſter remained in earneſt prayer, and ſaid again to God, "Oh, my Lord and my God, if it be Thy divine will, take this weeping from my eyes, and give me to deliver this ſermon to Thy praiſe and glory. But, if Thou doſt not do it, I take it as a ſign that Thou judgeſt I have not yet been enough put to ſhame. Now fulfil, dear Lord, Thy divine will on me Thy poor creature, to Thy praiſe and my neceſſities." This all availed nothing; he wept yet more and more. Then he ſaw that God would have it ſo, and ſaid, with weeping eyes, "Dear children, I am ſorry from my heart that I have kept you here ſo long, for I cannot ſpeak a word to-day for weeping; pray God for me, that He may help me, and then I will make amends to you, if God give me grace, another time, as ſoon as ever I am able." So the people departed, and this tale was ſpread abroad and reſounded through the whole city, ſo that he became a public laughing-ſtock, deſpiſed by all; and the people ſaid, "Now we all ſee that he has become a downright fool." And his own brethren ſtrictly forbade him to preach any more, becauſe he did the convent great injury thereby, and diſgraced the order with the ſenſeleſs practices that he had taken up, and which had diſordered his brain.

Wherefore he becomes a laughing-ſtock to all, and is forbidden to preach by his brethren.

Then the Maſter ſent for the man, and told him all

that had happened. The man ſaid, "Dear Maſter, be of good cheer, and be not diſmayed at theſe things. The Bridegroom is wont to behave ſo to all His beſt and deareſt friends, and it is a certain ſign that God is your good friend, for, without a doubt, He has ſeen ſome ſpeck of pride concealed within you that you have not perceived, nor been conſcious of yourſelf, and therefore it is that you have been put to ſhame. You may have received ſome great gifts of God, which you yourſelf do not know or perceive, that have been given you by means of the patience with which you have endured this aſſault; therefore be of good cheer, and be joyful and humble. Neither ſhould you think this a ſtrange thing, for I have ſeen many ſuch inſtances in other people. You ſhall not deſpise this preſſure of the croſs which God has ſent you, but count it a great bleſſing and favour from God. I counſel you that you remain alone for the next five days, and endure without ſpeaking to any, to the praiſe and glory of the five wounds of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And when the five days are ended, beg your Prior to give you permiſſion to deliver a ſermon in Latin. If he refuſe, beg him to let you try in the ſchool and read a lecture to the brethren." And he did ſo; and read to his brethren ſuch an excellent lecture as they had never heard in their lives before, ſo grand and

The Maſter ſends for the man, who conſoles him, telling him that it is no ſtrange thing that has happened to him.

The Maſter reads a lecture to his brethren in the ſchool.

Then he has permiſſion to preach again, and delivers a ſermon in a convent of ladies.

deep and godly was his doctrine. Then they gave him permiſſion to preach a ſermon; and after one of their brethren had preached in the church where the Maſter was wont to preach, he gave notice to the people, and ſaid, "I am ordered to announce that to-morrow the Maſter intends to preach in this place; but if it ſhould befal him as it did lately, I will not be anſwerable for it. So much I can ſay with truth, that in our ſchool he has read us a lecture containing ſuch great and profound inſtruction, with high and divine wiſdom, as we have not heard for a long time. But what he will do this time I know not; God only knoweth." The next day after, the Maſter came to the convent (it was a convent of ladies), and began to preach, and ſaid:

TENTH CHAPTER.

An excellent ſermon which this Doctor delivered in a convent after his illumination, concerning Chriſt the true Bridegroom of the ſoul, in the which he ſhowed how ſhe is to follow after Him in true, ſhamefaced, humble, and patient reſignation, and how Chriſt tries her beforehand in divers ways, and at laſt accepts her lovingly. Taken from these words—"Ecce ſponſus venit, exite obviam ei," (MATT. xxv. 6.)

The Maſter's ſermon.

"DEAR children, it may be now two years or more ſince I laſt preached. I ſpoke to you then of four-and-twenty Articles, and it was then my cuſtom to ſpeak much Latin, and to make many quotations; but I intend to do ſo no more, but if I wiſh to talk Latin, I will do ſo when the learned are preſent, who can underſtand it. For this time repeat only an Ave Maria to begin with, and pray for God's grace.

Dear children, I have taken a text on which I mean to preach this ſermon, and not to go beyond it: in the vulgar tongue it runs thus,—"*Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.*"

The Bridegroom is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the

The Bridegroom and the Bride.

Bride is the Holy Church and Chriſtendom. Now we are all called brides of Chriſt, wherefore we ought to be willing to go forth and meet our Bridegroom; but, alas! we are not ſo. The true paths and ſtraight highways by which to go out to meet the Bridegroom are, alas! now-a-days quite deſerted and falling into decay, till we have come hardly to perceive where they are; nay, this highway is to many quite ſtrange and unknown, ſo that they do not go out to meet the Bridegroom, as they are in duty bound to do, of which I will ſpeak another time, with God's help; but now, ſince we hear that we are all called brides, I will tell you ſomewhat concerning what the Bride muſt do in order to go and meet the Bridegroom.

That which is ſeemly for a faithful Bride.

It is ſeemly that a faithful Bride ſhould avoid everything that is diſpleaſing to the Bridegroom, ſuch as vain-glory, pride, envy, and all the other ſins of this world, and all the delights of the body and the fleſh, whether it be the eaſe and indulgence of the body, or other things which are beyond the neceſſaries of life. Further, it beſeems a faithful Bride to be ſhame-faced. When this comes to paſs, and the Bride, for her Bridegroom's ſake, has deſpiſed and given up all theſe things, then ſhe begins to be ſomewhat well-pleaſing to the Bridegroom.

But, if ſhe deſires to be yet more well-pleaſing in

His ſight, ſhe muſt humbly bow down before Him, and ſay with heart and lips, "Ah! my dear Lord and Bridegroom, Thou knoweſt all hearts. I have ſaid to Thee, with my whole heart, that I deſire to do all that I can and may, and to do it willingly, as far as Thou giveſt me to perceive through my conſcience what is agreeable and well-pleaſing to Thee." When the Bride makes this vow to the Bridegroom, He turneth himſelf and begins to look upon her. Then ſhe beſeeches Him to beſtow upon her ſome gift as a token of love. What is the gift? It is that ſhe is inwardly and outwardly beſet with divers aſſaults, with which He is wont to endow his ſpecial friends.

The Bride's vow.

But if the Bride be as yet unaccuſtomed to ſuffer, ſhe will ſay, "Ah! dear Lord and Bridegroom, this is very hard upon me; I fear greatly that I ſhall ſcarcely be able to endure it. Therefore, dear Lord and Bridegroom, I pray Thee to make my burden ſomewhat more tolerable, or elſe to take a part of it away." Then the Bridegroom anſwers, "Tell me then, dear Bride, ſhould the Bride fare better than the Bridegroom has fared? If thou deſireſt to meet the Bridegroom, thou muſt imitate Him in ſome ſort, and it is, moreover, reaſonable that a faithful Bride ſhould ſuffer ſomewhat with Him for her Bride-

The Bridegroom's firſt gift of ſore temptations.

His ſecond gift, that ſhe can take no pleaſure in aught of her own.

groom's ſake." Now when the Bride heareth what is the will of her Bridegroom, and how grave a matter it is, ſhe is ſore affrighted, and ſays, "Dear Lord and Bridegroom, be not wroth with me, for I will gladly hearken unto Thee: appoint unto me what Thou wilt; I am willing to ſuffer all things with Thy help and in Thy love." When the Bridegroom heareth this, He loveth the Bride yet better than He did before, and giveth her to drink of a ſtill better cup. This cup is that ſhe is to ceaſe from all her own thoughts, and all her works and refrainings will give her no content, for ſhe can take pleaſure in nothing that is her own. However good the actions may be in themſelves, ſhe is always thinking how ſhe ſhall anger her Bridegroom therewith, and feareth much that ſhe will, perhaps, have to ſuffer a great puniſhment for them hereafter. Moreover, ſhe is derided by all, and theſe things are accounted her folly.

The Bride's fears.

Now, children, by reaſon of all theſe things, her natural powers become wearied out and grow feeble, inſomuch that ſhe is conſtantly in fear leſt ſhe ſhould not hold out to the end, but muſt die at laſt; and hereupon ſhe is greatly terrified, for ſhe is yet ſomewhat timorous and faint-hearted. Then ſhe cries earneſtly unto the Bridegroom, and ſays, "Ah! dear Lord and Bridegroom, how great are Thy terrors;

know that I cannot endure them long: I muſt die." But the Bridegroom anſwers, "If thou wilt in truth go out to meet thy Bridegroom, it is fitting that thou ſhould firſt tread ſome portion of the path that He has travelled. Now whereas the Bridegroom has ſuffered ſhame, hunger, cold, thirſt, heat, and bitter pains, for three and thirty years, and at laſt a bitter death, for the Bride's ſake, out of pure love, is it not juſt and right that the Bride ſhould venture even her life for the Bridegroom's ſake, out of love, and with all her heart? Verily, if thou hadſt the right ſort of love and true faithfulneſs unto thy Bridegroom, all thy fear would vaniſh."

The Bridegroom's anſwer, that ſhe muſt be made like unto Him.

Then when ſhe hears theſe words of the Bridegroom her whole heart is moved with fear, and ſhe ſays, "Ah! dear Lord, I acknowledge in all ſincerity that I have done wrong, and I am out of all meaſure terrified at it; I grieve from the bottom of my heart that I have not with a faithful heart yielded myſelf up unto Thee, even unto death. Dear Lord and Bridegroom, I here vow and promiſe to Thee ſurely that all which Thou willeſt I alſo will. Come ſickneſs, come health, come pleaſure or pain, ſweet or bitter, cold or heat, wet or dry, whatever Thou willeſt, that do I alſo will; and deſire altogether to come out from my own will, and to yield a whole and willing

The Bride's humble ſubmiſſion.

obedience unto Thee, and never to deſire aught elſe either in will or thought: only let Thy will be accompliſhed in me, Thy poor unworthy creature, in time and in eternity. For, dear Lord, when I look at what I am, I am not worthy that the earth ſhould bear me."

The Bridegroom's gift of yet ſorer trials.

Now when the Bridegroom ſeeth this entire and faithful will in the Bride, and her deep and thorough humility, what does He then do? His heart yearns over the Bride, and giveth her a very coſtly, noble, ſweet cup to drink. What is this cup? It is that ſhe ſuffers yet far more from all manner of temptations and tribulation than ſhe has ever ſuffered before. And when the Bride perceiveth this, and ſeeth the Bridegroom's earneſtneſs and good pleaſure concerning her, ſhe ſuffereth all theſe things willingly and gladly for the Bridegroom's ſake, and boweth herſelf down humbly before Him, and ſaith, "Ah! dear Lord and Bridegroom, it is juſt and right that Thou ſhouldeſt not will as I will, but I deſire and ought to will as Thou wilt; I receive this gift right willingly and gladly for Thy love from Thy divine hand, whether it be pleaſant or painful to the fleſh, I acquieſce wholly in it for love of Thee."

The Bride's joy in ſuffering for His ſake.

Now when the Bridegroom, in His eternal wiſdom, perceives this diſpoſition within His humble Bride, and her thorough earneſtneſs, ſhe begins to grow pre-

cious to Him, and from hearty love He giveth her to ſuffer in all her nature, until the Bride is wholly purified from all faults and ſtain of ſin, and become perfectly fair and unſpotted. Then He ſays, "Now riſe up, my beloved, my pleaſant, my beautiful Bride, for Thou art pure and without ſpot, and altogether lovely in my eyes." Then He looks upon her with infinite, mighty, divine love. To this joyful high-tide cometh the Father of the Eternal Bridegroom, and ſaith to the Bride, "Riſe up, my lovely, choſen beloved, it is time to go to Church," and He taketh the Bridegroom and the Bride, and leadeth them to the Church, and marries them to each other, and binds them together with divine love; yea, God doth bind them together in bonds ſo faſt that they can never be parted again, either in time or eternity. And when, in theſe divine eſpouſals, they have been made one, the Bridegroom ſaith, "O, beloved and Eternal Father, what ſhall be our wedding-gift?" And the Father ſaith, "The Holy Ghoſt, for that it is His office to be in the Father's ſtead." And He ſheds forth upon the Bride the torrent of divine love, and this love flows out unto the Bridegroom, inſo-much that the Bride loſeth herſelf, and is intoxicated with love, ſo that ſhe forgets herſelf and all creatures, in time or eternity, together with herſelf.

The beauty of the purified Bride.

The marriage-feaſt.

The gift of the Father.

The joy of the Bride.

Now he only who is bidden to ſuch a ſpiritual, glorious marriage-feaſt, and has obeyed the call, does for the firſt time perceive and taſte the real, true, bleſſed, gracious ſweetneſs of the Holy Spirit. Now is this Bride a true worſhipper, for ſhe worſhippeth the Father in the Holy Spirit. In this marriage-feaſt is joy upon joy, and therein is more peace and joy in one hour than all the creatures can yield in time or in eternity. The joy that the Bride hath with the Bridegroom is ſo vaſt that no ſenſes or reaſon can apprehend or attain unto it."

The people are ſtrangely moved hereat.

As the Doctor ſpoke theſe words a man cried out with a loud voice, "It is true!" and fell down as if he were dead. Then a woman called out from the crowd and ſaid, "Maſter, leave off, or this man will die on our hands."

Then the Maſter ſaid, "Ah, dear children, and if the Bridegroom take the Bride and lead her home with Him, we will gladly yield her to Him; nevertheleſs, I will make an end and leave off. Dear children, let us all cry unto the Lord our God in Heaven. For verily we have all need ſo to do, ſeeing that, alas! we have grown ſo dull of hearing and fooliſh of heart that none of us has compaſſion on his fellow, although we confeſs that we are all called brothers and ſiſters. There be alſo few who are willing to fight their way

againſt their own fleſh, and follow the Bridegroom, in order to reach a nobler joy and a glorious wedding-feaſt.

The Maſter biddeth them all ſtrive to come to this marriage-feaſt.

I give you to know that in theſe days thoſe be few and far between who do truly go out to meet the Bridegroom, ſuch as there were many in the olden time. Therefore it behoveth each one to look at himſelf and conſider his ways with great earneſtneſs. For the time is at hand—nay, it is already come—when it may be ſaid of moſt who are now living here, that "they have eyes and ſee not, and ears that hear not." Dear children, let us all ſtrive to enter into this wedding-feaſt, moſt rich in joy, and honour, and bleſſedneſs.

The Bride's ſorrows while ſhe is yet in this earthly ſtate.

But when the Bride departs from this marriage-feaſt and is left to herſelf, and beholds that ſhe has come back again to this miserable earthly ſtate, ſhe ſays within herſelf, "O! poor miſerable creature that I am, am I here again?" And ſhe is ſad in herſelf; nevertheleſs, ſhe is ſo utterly reſigned in boundleſs humility to her Bridegroom, that ſhe in no wiſe may think of or deſire His preſence, becauſe ſhe deems herſelf wholly unworthy thereof. But the Bridegroom does not therefore forſake her, but looketh upon His Bride from time to time, becauſe He well knoweth that none will or can comfort her, but He alone.

The comfort ſhe hath therein from the love of the Bride-groom.

And now that you have heard this, let it not ſurpriſe you that I have not told you how lovingly the Bridegroom talketh with the Bride. It might well happen that none would believe me (except ſuch a one as had tried and taſted it himſelf), ſhould I tell you what ſtrange words the Bride ſaith to her Bridegroom. We find, too, in the Scriptures, that the loving ſoul ofttimes holds ſuch converſe with her Beloved as words cannot perfectly expreſs. Nay, does it not happen every day with earthly lovers, that a bride and bridegroom talk together in ſuch wiſe that if others heard it they would declare them mad or drunk?

The End.

Now, dear children, I fear that I have kept you too long; but the time has not ſeemed long to me: alſo, I have ſaid it all for your good, and could not well this time make my ſermon ſhorter if I were rightly to explain my meaning; therefore receive it kindly.

That we may all become real, true, perfect brides of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that we may in ſincere, true, utter humility and reſignation, go out to meet our glorious Bridegroom, and abide with Him for ever, may God help us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. Amen."

ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Of a great prodigy that was wrought in certain perſons through this ſermon, as afterwards appeared, whereby we are given to underſtand what great wonders God works by good inſtruments, that is, that He will do more by one ſermon of an enlightened man than by a hundred others.

The man perceives the people tarry in the churchyard.

WHEN this ſermon was ended, the Maſter went down and read Maſs, and gave the Lord's Body to certain good people; but after the ſermon the man perceived that ſome forty people remained ſitting in the churchyard. When Maſs was over he told the Maſter of it, and they went out to where he had ſeen the people ſitting that they might ſee how it was with them. But in the meantime, while the Maſter had been celebrating Maſs, they had riſen up and gone away, except twelve, who were ſtill there. Then ſaid the Maſter to the man, "Dear ſon, what doſt thou think we had beſt do with theſe people?" Then the man went from one to another and touched them, but they lay as if they were dead, and ſcarcely moved. The Maſter knew not what to think of this ſtrange thing, for he

The Maſter fears ſome of them be dead,

had never ſeen the like before, and ſo he ſaid to the man, "Tell me, what doſt thou think? Are the people alive or dead?" Then he ſmiled and ſaid, "If they were dead, it would be your fault and the Bridegroom's; how then ſhould you bring them round again?" The Maſter ſaid, "But if the Bridegroom be with me in this buſineſs, ought I to awaken them?" The man anſwered, "Sir, theſe people are ſtill in this preſent ſtate, and I wiſh that you would aſk the convent ladies to let them be carried into their cloiſter, that they may not take ſome ſickneſs and harm to their bodies, by lying in the open air on the cold earth." And they did ſo; and the people were brought into a warm place. Then the convent ladies ſaid, "Dear ſir, we have a nun here to whom the ſame thing has happened, and ſhe is lying on her bed as if ſhe were dead." Then ſaid the Maſter, "My dear daughters, be patient, for God's ſake, and look to theſe ſick people, and when any one of them comes to himſelf give him ſomething warm to take; if he will have it, give it him in Chriſt's name." And the ladies ſaid they would willingly do ſo. So the Maſter and the man went their way, and entered into the Maſter's cell. Then the man ſaid, "Now, dear Maſter, what think you of this? Has the like ever happened to you in your life before? Now I wot you ſee what

But the man bids them be brought into the convent until they come to themſelves.

wonders God works with good tools. Dear ſir, I perceive that this ſermon will ſtir many, and one will tell it to another. If it pleaſe you, methinks it were well that you let theſe ſick children reſt for awhile, for this ſermon will give them plenty to digeſt for ſome time, and if you think it good, and God give you ſo to do, that you preach a ſermon alſo to thoſe who are in the world, ſeeing it is now Lent." And the Maſter did ſo gladly, and preached alſo to thoſe who were in the world, to the great amendment of certain of them.*

The Maſter preaches alſo to thoſe who are in the world.

* Here follow two chapters in the original, containing ſketches of other ſermons preached by Tauler; but as they are leſs valuable than moſt of his ſermons, and have nothing whatever to do with the progreſs of the ſtory, I have judged it beſt to omit them.—Tr.

FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

How this holy Doctor came to his end, and afterward appeared to his dear friend the layman, and ſhowed him the cauſe of his painful departure from this world, to wit that it had been his purgatory, after which he attained great joy and eternal bleſſedneſs, which were given him by God as the reward of his good and faithful teaching.

The great eſteem in which the Maſter came to be held through all the land.

NOW you muſt know that the Maſter made progreſs in the divine life, and received ſuch wiſdom, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that he preached both to clergy and laity, and came to be held in ſuch eſteem and honour throughout the land, and alſo in that city, that whenever the people had any weighty matter to tranſact, he was called in to ſettle it with his wiſdom, whether it concerned ſpiritual or temporal affairs, and whatever he counſelled them was right in their eyes, and they hearkened unto him gladly. And after that the Maſter had led this faithful life full eight years, God would not leave His ſervant longer in this earthly miſery, and ſaw fit to take him to Himself without purgatory. Wherefore He ſent His judgments upon him, and viſited him with ſickneſs, ſo that the Maſter kept

his bed for more than twenty weeks, and his ſufferings were very ſore, and his pains grievous. Then he perceived, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that he was about to depart from this world (God was minded to reward him for his work); wherefore he ſent for the man, his dear friend, and begged him to come to him, for he expected not to be much longer in this world. And the man hearkened and came to the Maſter, who received him after a moſt friendly ſort; and the man was glad that he found him yet alive, and ſaid, "Dear Maſter, how fares it with you?" The Maſter ſaid, "I believe that the time is very near when God purpoſes to take me from this world, for which cauſe, dear ſon, it is a great conſolation to me that thou art preſent at my end. I pray thee take theſe books which are lying there: thou wilt find written therein all thy diſcourſe with me aforetime, and alſo my anſwers, and thou wilt find ſomewhat concerning my life, and the dealings of God with me His poor unworthy ſervant. Dear ſon, if thou think fit, and if God give thee grace, make a little book of it." Then ſaid the man, "Dear Maſter, I have written down five of your ſermons, and if it pleaſe you, I will write them out alſo, and will make a little book about you." Quoth the Maſter, "Dear ſon, I lay upon thee my moſt ſolemn admonition, that

His long and grievous ſickneſs.

He ſends for his friend the man.

He delivers his writings to the man, and charges him to make a little book concerning him, not naming their names.

thou write nothing about me, and that thou do not mention my name; for thou muſt know that of a truth the life, and words, and works which God has wrought through me a poor, unworthy, ſinful man, are not mine, but belong to God Almighty, now and for evermore; therefore, dear ſon, if thou wilt write it down for the profit of our fellow-Chriſtians, write it ſo that neither my name nor thine be named, but thou mayſt ſay the Maſter and the man. Moreover, thou ſhalt not ſuffer the book to be read or ſeen by any one in this town, leſt he ſhould mark that it was I, but take it home with thee to thy own country, and let it not come out during my life."

The Maſter's promiſe to viſit the man after his death, and his hard end.

And for a ſpace of eleven days the Maſter held much diſcourſe with the man. After that, the time came that the Maſter ſhould die. Then he ſaid, "Dear ſon, I pray thee, in God's name, to give thy conſent to it, if God ſhould permit my ſpirit to come back to thee, and tell thee how it fared with me." The man anſwered, "Dear Maſter, if God will have it ſo, I am alſo willing." But it came to paſs that at the laſt the Maſter had a moſt horrible and frightful death-ſtruggle, inſomuch that all the brethren in the convent, and alſo other people, were greatly terrified and diſtreſſed thereat, and were ſore amazed at the dreadful anguiſh that they ſaw in his death.

Now when he was dead, all who were in the convent and the city were filled with ſorrow. But when they perceived who was the man that had been ſo long his boſom-friend in ſecret, they came and deſired to ſhow him honour, and beſought him to be their gueſt. But when he was aware of their intent, he fled that ſame hour out of the city, and travelled home again. And as he was on the way, the third day after the Maſter's death, at nightfall he was paſsing through a little village with his ſervant, and ſeeing a nobleman go paſt along the road, he ſaid to him, "My friend, is there any inn in this village?" The nobleman anſwered, "No." Then ſaid the man, "Then ſhow us the kindneſs, dear friend, in God's name, to let us lodge in thy houſe for to-night, and take for it what thou wilt." Then he ſaid, "If you will put up with ſuch things as we have, I will willingly lodge you, and give you the beſt in my power." So he took him home with him. When it was night he laid the man upon a feather-bed, and ſhowed the ſervant into the barn to lie upon the ſtraw. Now in the night the man awoke and heard a voice cloſe by; yet he ſaw no one. Then a ſhudder ran through him, and he made the ſign of the Croſs. Then the voice ſaid, "Fear not, dear ſon, it is I, the Maſter." Then ſaid the man, "Dear Maſter, is it you? Then

The whole city is filled with ſorrow for him, and would do honour for his ſake to his friend.

His friend departeth ſecretly homewards.

The ſpirit of the Maſter comes to him three days afterwards, and opens to him the cauſe of his hard death.

I beſeech you, with my whole heart, to tell me, if God will, how it ſtandeth with you, and how it came to paſs that you had ſuch a dreadful end; for your brethren in the convent were much aſtonied at you, and it is to be feared that your frightful end will be a great ſtumbling-block to your own brethren in the convent." Then ſaid the Maſter's voice, "Dear ſon, that will I tell thee. Thou muſt know that our Lord God ſaw fit to appoint me ſuch a hard death in order that the holy angels might ſtraightway receive my ſoul to themſelves; and for the ſame cauſe thou ſhalt alſo have ſuch a like hard death. It was needful that I ſhould ſuffer this as a purgatory; but know likewiſe, my dear ſon, that the evil ſpirits tormented me greatly, and aſſailed me with ſuch cunning and inſtancy, that I was in conſtant fear leſt my courage ſhould fail me. But, however hard my death was, it was as nothing compared to the joy which the Almighty, Eternal, and Merciful God hath given me in return. Know, dear ſon, that the ſame hour in which my ſoul left my body, the bleſſed angels received it, and conducted me to Paradiſe, and ſaid to me, 'Here ſhalt thou tarry five days, and ſhalt know no anxiety or fear leſt the evil ſpirits ſhould harm thee any more, neither ſhalt thou labour any more, only thou ſhalt be deprived for theſe five days of the

The Maſter tells him of his preſent happineſs,

blisſful company of the bleſſed in eternity. And then we will come again with joy, and bring thee to the unſpeakable joys, and reward thee for thy good and faithful teaching and uſeful counſels;' all which I have received by thy excellent inſtruction, for the which I can never thank God and thee enough."

and thanks the man for the good inſtruction he had given him in this life.

Then ſaid the man: "Dear Maſter, I beſeech you from the bottom of my heart that when you come into the preſence of God, you pray Him for me." But whatever the man ſaid after this, or whatever queſtions he put, no one anſwered him again. Then he would fain have ſlept, and turned from one ſide to the other; but it availed him nothing: he got no more reſt that night, and could hardly wait till it was light. And at day-break he roſe up, and wrote that ſame hour word to the Prior and brethren of all things that the ſpirit had ſaid to him, and returned to his own houſe, and came alſo to a good and bleſſed end.

At daybreak the man ariſes and writes word of his viſion to the Maſter's convent.

That we may all follow the pattern of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, inſomuch that after this miſerable life and this tranſitory world we may come to eternal and never-ending joys,—to God and His choſen and beloved friends, may He help us, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. Amen!

The end.

Here endeth the Hiſtory of the Life of the enlightened Doctor John Tauler.



Introductory Notice

RESPECTING

TAULER'S LIFE AND TIMES.

By the TRANSLATOR.

JOHN TAULER, who appears "as the Maſter" in the foregoing Hiſtory, was born at Straſburg in the year 1290. His father was moſt probably Nicolas Tauler, whoſe name occurs among thoſe of the ſenators of Straſburg in 1313. At all events, he belonged to a tolerably wealthy family, and might have lived on his patrimony, ſince he tells us in one of his ſermons: "Had I known when I lived as my father's ſon, all that I know now, I would have lived on his heritage and not upon alms." He devoted himſelf, however, in early years to a clerical life, and entered the Dominican Order in Straſburg, taking up his abode in the handſome, ſpacious

convent belonging to that Order, the church of which was conſecrated in the year 1308. A ſiſter of his was a nun in the convent of St. Nicolas at Krautenau, likewiſe belonging to the Dominican Order. In what year Tauler renounced the world cannot be determined with preciſion, but there can be little doubt that he did ſo at the ſame time with his friend John von Dambach, in 1308. From alluſions in his writings, it ſeems probable that he ſoon after, with the ſame friend, betook himſelf to Paris, the great metropolis of Chriſtian learning in that age, in order to ſtudy theology in the famous Dominican College of St. Jacques, from which the monks of that Order were called Jacobins in France.

The Univerſity concentrated within its precincts repreſentatives of the varied intellectual tendencies of the age. Up to the middle of the thirteenth century, it had been diſtinguiſhed by the freedom of thought which prevailed among its teachers, unſhackled as they were by any epiſcopal, almoſt by any regal juriſdiction over their doctrine, and acknowledging only the authority of the Pope himſelf, directly exerciſed. The influence of the all-queſtioning Abelard, the ſubtle Gilbert de la Porée, the pantheiſtic Amaury de Bene, and other free-thinking teachers, was not extinct, though they lay under the cenſure of hereſy. The works of Ariſtotle, condemned in 1209, had been gradually introduced into the ſchools, with the Arabian commentaries of Avicenna and Averrhoes. The Dominican Order, founded for the extirpation of hereſy, early recogniſed the prime neceſſity of providing inſtruction which ſhould purify the ſtreams of human

thought at their fountain-head; and in ſpite of the oppoſition raiſed by the heads of the Univerſity, ſucceeded, in 1228, in eſtabliſhing theological chairs in their convent in Paris, from which to combat the heathenizing philoſophers of Chriſtendom with their own weapons of reaſon; and in Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas they may be ſaid to have reconquered philoſophy for the Church, and Chriſtianized Ariſtotle, who thenceforth became the eſtabliſhed maſter of philoſophy, but was ſtudied through the commentaries of the great Dominican luminary.

But the coloſſal volumes of the ſchoolmen, embracing as they did within the vaſt ſweep of their ſpeculation diſquiſitions upon the nature of the Godhead, upon the univerſe of ſuperhuman intelligence revealed by the pſeudo-Dionyſius, and upon the nature of man and matter,—while affording a tremendous gymnaſtic diſcipline to the human intellect, were barren in actual practical reſults, and might well be unſatisfactory to one whoſe ſoul craved to be ſomething more than a logical athlete. And it is evident that, in his later life, Tauler did not look back upon the ſcholaſtic theology which he ſtudied during his ſojourn in Paris as having taught him that which anſwered to the needs of his ſpirit. Thus, in one paſſage of his ſermons he ſays: "Theſe great maſters of Paris do read vaſt books, and turn over the leaves with great diligence, which is a very good thing; but theſe [ſpiritually enlightened men] read the true living book, wherein all things live: they turn over the pages of the heavens and the earth, and read therein the mighty and admirable won-

ders of God." He ſeldom cites any of the ſchoolmen in his writings, with the exception of "Maſter Thomas;" but he not unfrequently refers to Ariſtotle, under the title of the "Natural Maſter," or the "Maſter of Nature." The authors who ſeem to have had the greateſt attraction for him, and whom he muſt have early made the ſubject of his ſtudy, judging from the acquaintance with them diſplayed in his writings, and the little leiſure which he could have had for ſuch purſuits during the buſy activity of his later years, were the more myſtical and ſpeculative among the eccleſiaſtical writers, the pſeudo-Dionyſius, the Monks of the ſchool of St. Victor, St. Bernard, and above all St. Auguſtin. Neither was he a ſtranger to the Neoplatoniſts,—Proclus is referred to ſeveral times in his writings.

While the whole bent of Tauler's mind thus appears to have diſpoſed him to contemplation on the great ſpiritual queſtions immediately affecting man's actual deſtiny, rather than more purely intellectual theſes, he muſt, on returning from Paris to Straſburg, have come in contact with ſeveral of the myſtical teachers whom we know to have flouriſhed there about this time, and who certainly cannot have been without influence on the courſe of his mental development. The moſt eminent of theſe was the celebrated Maſter Eckart, a brother of his own Order, who, after having filled the important offices of Provincial in Saxony and Vicar-General in Bohemia, had returned to Straſburg, where, with the earneſtneſs of profound conviction, he was now diſcourſing to the people in their native tongue, on lofty philoſophical themes,

till then only deemed fit to be treated of in Latin before learned aſſemblies; and which he handled in a way that he himſelf confeſſes to be contrary to what any of the Maſters had taught hitherto. Yet it is clear, from the accuſations afterwards brought againſt him of miſleading the vulgar, that the metaphyſical ſpeculations which form the ſtaple of his ſermons, though they would ſeem to us utterly beyond the range of ordinary thinkers, muſt have touched ſome chords in the hearts of the multitude, expreſſed as they are, not only in a ſharp, clear, forcible ſtyle, but often clothed in a thoroughly popular form, and illuſtrated by metaphors appealing to the eye, and allegorical interpretations of Scripture hiſtories.*

The man himſelf and his doctrines were equally calculated to make a powerful impreſſion on the mind of the youthful Tauler, already diſſatisfied with the frigid ſubtleties of the dialecticians, and arriving at an age when he was called on to exerciſe his voca-

* I borrow the following note from Schmidt's "*Eckart.*" *Theolog. Stud. u. Krit.* 1839, S. 684, An. 15. "The raiſing of the widow's ſon furniſhes him with materials for more than one "allegory. In the Second Sermon on the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, the widow is firſt "the ſoul, and her dead ſon, the Reaſon, which Our Lord animates with new life; afterwards "a widow ſignifies a forſaken one, and taken in an abſtract ſenſe, a ſtate of lonelineſs, and forth- "with Eckart ſprings to the concluſion, that therefore we alſo muſt forſake all things. In the "ſtory of the woman of Samaria, the woman is a type of the ſoul, the five huſbands whom ſhe "has had are the five ſenſes; with theſe ſhe had ſinned, and therefore are they dead. Chriſt "ſays: 'Bring hither thy huſband;' this is Free-will. She replies: 'I have no huſband;' "on which Chriſt ſays: 'Thou haſt well ſaid I have no huſband;' that is, her Free-will was "not her own, but in bondage to ſin, etc."

tion as a preaching friar in times of extraordinary commotion and perplexity.

Eckart's keen and ſoaring intellect had been trained by a cloſe ſtudy of the Fathers and the Schoolmen before he became a profeſſor in the convent of St. Jacques at Paris, in which poſition he ſoon acquired no ordinary fame; being eſteemed (according to the ſtatement of the Abbot Trithemius in his great encyclopædia of eccleſiaſtical writers) "the moſt learned man of his day in the Ariſtotelian philoſophy." The vivid remembrance of ſuch a maſter would be ſtill lingering in the hearts of many pupils when Tauler came to Paris; though Eckart himſelf muſt have quitted his profeſſorſhip ſome years before, as, on account of the ſeverity of his morals and the firmneſs of his character, he was appointed, in 1304, Provincial of the Dominican Order in Saxony, where he laboured with ſuch ſucceſs in the reſtoration of diſcipline, that three years later he was made Vicar-General of Saxony, with the expreſs commiſſion to undertake any improvements and reforms in the Order that he might judge neceſſary. In this new ſphere of action, likewiſe, he ſoon became celebrated as a preacher and metaphyſical teacher. From this date, when he was held in reverence by the Church, he diſappears from our view for a ſpace of ſome years; after which we find him in Straſburg, diveſted of his dignities, but preaching with great effect his peculiar doctrines, now in his mature life elaborated into a ſyſtem which has been claimed by Hegel and ſome of his diſciples as the parent of the German

philoſophy.* To ſay whether this claim is juſt would require a knowledge of Hegel and his ſchool, which I do not poſſeſs.† That which was the aim of all Eckart's reaſonings, to which all elſe was but a means, was the perfect repoſe of a ſpirit in abſolute union with God, and dwelling in a region far above the clouds and tempeſts of this changeful, barren life of ſenſe. He himſelf appears to have attained in a high degree to this ſtate of abiding peace; yet his writings are pervaded by a ſtrain of deep lamentation over the imperfections of this earthly ſphere, and the miſery ariſing from a ſenſe of ſeparation from God. In fact, he certainly retains a poſitive and vivid ſenſe of the nature of ſin; whether this be conſiſtent with Pantheiſm or Hegelianiſm, I leave thoſe better qualified to judge. In the paſſionate endeavour to free himſelf from the entanglements of the creature, and to enter into living union with God, he, however, undoubtedly does not eſcape the danger of merging created exiſtence in the one uncreated Eſſence which alone has true Being, and forgetting the limits that bar our approach to the Infinite. Thus he ſays: "That word, *I am*, can none truly ſpeak but God alone." "He has the Subſtance of all creatures in Himſelf; He is a "being that has all Being in Himſelf." "All things are in God, "and all things are God." "All creatures in themſelves are

* See Schmidt's *Eckart.* Theol. Stud. u. Krit. 1839, S. 663.

† Neither is my acquaintance with Eckart extenſive; but I have made no ſtatement in the text which does not ſeem to me ſubſtantiated by what I have read of his writings.

"naught; all creatures are a ſpeaking of God." "Doſt thou "aſk me what was the purpoſe of the Creator when He made the "creatures? I anſwer, Repoſe. Doſt thou aſk again what all "creatures ſeek in their ſpontaneous aſpiration? I anſwer again, "Repoſe. Doſt thou aſk a third time what the ſoul ſeeks in all "her motions? I anſwer, Repoſe. Conſciouſly or unconſciouſly "all creatures ſeek their proper ſtate. The ſtone cannot ceaſe "moving till it touch the earth; the fire riſes up to heaven: thus "a loving ſoul can never reſt but in God, and ſo we ſay God has "given to all things their proper place,—to the fiſh the water, to "the bird the air, to the beaſt the earth, to the ſoul the Godhead." "Simple people conceive that we are to ſee God, as if He ſtood "on that ſide and we on this. It is not ſo; God and I are one in "the act of my perceiving Him." "O noble ſoul, put on theſe "wings to thy feet and riſe above all creatures, and above thine "own reaſon, and above the angelic choirs, and above the light "that has given thee ſtrength, and throw thyſelf upon the heart of "God; there ſhalt thou lie hidden from all creatures." But if, in thus denying a ſeparate exiſtence to the creature, he uſes expreſſions which logically conduct to Pantheiſm, on the other hand his God is clearly a living God; not a mere object of philoſophical thought, but an actual and working reality.* So, again, ſome of his

* The ſecond Sermon in the following collection, which is undoubtedly by him, exhibits the mode in which he preſents abſtract doctrines clothed in a popular form, and is not an unfavourable specimen of his ſtyle, though even more fragmentary than ſome others of his diſcourſes.

expreſſions might ſeem to imply Antinomianiſm, as when he ſays: "Whenever a man enters into this union with God, that "God is ſo dear to him that he forgets himſelf, nor ſeeks him-"ſelf either in time or in eternity, ſo oft does he become free "from all his ſins and all his purgatory, though he ſhould have "committed all the ſins of all mankind:" and we can hardly doubt, from what we read of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, that ſome did abuſe Eckart's doctrine of the inward freedom of the ſpirit to juſtify ſin in pretenders to piety. But it does not ſeem that even his enemies ever doubted of his own high morality; while Quetif and Echard, in their *Scriptores ordinis Prædicatorum*, praiſe him as a *virum moribus et ſcientia probatiſſimum, omni laude ſuperiorem*, and add that a hundred years after him a brother of his Order ſays of him, that he was *vita puriſſimus, expeditus Doctor Eccleſiæ, ſuo tempore incomparabilis eruditione, fide, converſatione et moribus inſignis.*

Eckart always endeavours to bring his ſpeculations into combination with the theology of the Church; but the interpretation which he puts upon the received dogmas often deviates widely from their ſpirit.* He evidently regards, nay, openly

* He was, for inſtance, accuſed of teaching that Hell did not exiſt: his real teaching was that it conſiſted in the abſence of God, as appears from the following paſſage:—"It is a "queſtion, what burns in hell? The Maſters commonly ſay, Self-will. But I ſay of a truth "that *Nought* burns in hell. Whereof mark this likeneſs Were you to take a burning coal "and lay it on my hand, if I were to ſay that the coal burnt my hand I ſhould do it a great

proclaims, outward rites and obſervances as not neceſſary to the eſſence of piety. Traces of his familiarity with the Schoolmen may be found in his ſubtile and often purely formal diſtinctions and ſyllogiſms; but their ſpirit was utterly repugnant to his. On this point Profeſſor Schmidt ſays:—"Regarding Neopla-
"toniſm as by no means incompatible with Chriſtianity, his
"philoſophical views reſemble in their general tendency thoſe of
"Dionyſius Areopagita, combining with them the myſtical ele-
"ments contained in the writings of St. Auguſtine. The theory
"of that great Father reſpecting the total corruption of human
"nature does not, however, occur in his writings in the ſenſe in
"which it is underſtood by the Church. With Plato himſelf
"he is not unacquainted, but cites him ſeveral times, calling
"him 'the great Parſon' *(Der groſſe Pfaffe)*. Scotus Erigena,
"the tranſlator of the Platonizing Dionyſius, though not named
"in his writings, muſt be regarded as furniſhing the ſtarting
"point for his theories. Of the other myſtics of the middle ages
"he only names St. Bernard. But he has not reſted within the
"ſyſtems advanced by any of the philoſophers he ſtudied; he

"injuſtice. Strictly ſpeaking, what burns me is Nought; for the coal has ſomething in it which "my hand has not. See, it is that ſame *Not* which burns me. If my hand poſſeſſed all the "eſſence and qualities of a coal, it would have altogether the nature of fire; and then, if you "were to throw all the fire that ever burnt upon my hand, it would not give me pain. In like "manner, I ſay, if God, and thoſe who are in the light of His countenance, have aught of true "bleſſedneſs which thoſe have not who are ſeparated from God, it is that ſame *Not* which tor-"tures the ſouls that are in hell, more than any fire or than ſelf-will."

" made all the ideas that he may have derived from them his " own, and gave them a further development, ſo that his poſition " is that of a thoroughly original thinker."

After preaching ſome time in Straſburg, Eckart appears to have removed to Cologne. It is not known whether or not he had found it neceſſary to leave the former city; but it ſeems not improbable that he may have fallen under accuſation of hereſy there, from the circumſtance that many of the propoſitions condemned by the Biſhop (John of Ochſenſtein) in 1317, as the doctrines of the Straſburg Beghards, agree, often word for word, with propoſitions to be found in Eckart's writings. In Cologne he preached publicly for a few years in the church of his convent, and taught in the univerſity; but he was not ſuffered to remain long unmoleſted. The way in which his writings were used by the Beghards, who were condemned by the Archbiſhop of Cologne in 1322, appears to have drawn the attention of the latter to his preaching. He cited Eckart to appear before him, and accuſed him of hereſy; but as Eckart refuſed to ſubmit to his ſentence, and continued to preach, the Archbiſhop appealed to the Pope. His writings were at length condemned in a bull dated March 1329, from which it appears that he was then no more, as it is ſtated that he had returned to the Catholic faith before his death. It ſeems utterly inconſiſtent with the deep conviction that pervades his writings, and the inflexibility of his character, to ſuppoſe that he ſhould have recanted any of his doctrines; but probably he merely expreſſed

his adherence to the doctrines of the Church, which he never ſeems to have intended to impugn, but to place upon what he regarded as their true foundation. He never ſeparated from the communion of the Church, and gathered round him in Cologne a circle of ardent admirers, among whom was probably Tauler* (who ſeems to have often viſited Cologne), and certainly Suſo, whoſe biographer relates: "After theſe dreadful ſufferings (of conſcience) had laſted near upon ten years, . . . he came to the holy Maſter Eckart, and told him of his pain, . . . and the Doctor helped him out of it."†

Tauler's influence upon his countrymen has been ſo much more powerful and enduring than that of Eckart, that he has often been called erroneouſly the firſt of the German Myſtics, and Eckart repreſented as his pupil. While, however, in his general caſt of thought and language, Tauler bears traces of Eckart's influence, his views do not appear at any period to have been identical with thoſe of his forerunner. Though inclined to ſpeculation, his whole turn of mind and character was more practical than that of Eckart, and his attention more directed to the application of religious principles to real life. Even the ſermon which, as we have read, he preached before the remarkable change

* Tauler quotes Eckart. See the Second Sermon for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

† See Diepenbrock's *Suſo*. Regenſburg, 1829. S. 71. A very intereſting account of Suſo's life, concerning which much more is known than of Tauler's, is given in Ullmann's "Reformers before the Reformation." See p. 190, etc.

wrought in him through the agency of the great Layman, though diſplaying more formality and ſubtlety with leſs of tenderneſs, unction, and ſpirituality than generally characterize his later ſermons, is yet far leſs abſtruſe and metaphyſical, and has far more bearing upon morals and life, than is the caſe with Eckart's diſcourſes.

There was, however, another famous Dominican preacher at Straſburg, in Tauler's youthful days, Nicolas of Straſburg, who though alſo a myſtic, and poſſeſſing a very powerful intellect, was a man of a very different ſtamp from Eckart, and who appears to have always ſtood in high favour with the heads of the Church. He was the author of ſeveral works, and was appointed by Pope John XXII. Nuncio, with the overſight of all the Dominican convents in the province of Germany. I have not had the opportunity of reading any of his productions; Profeſſor Schmidt deſcribes his preaching as leſs ſpeculative and much more popular, intelligible, and practical than Eckart's, and ſays that "his ſermons are rather myſtical and aſcetic than, ſtrictly ſpeaking, metaphyſical; they breathe a profound yearning after inward peace and a glowing love to God, but do not diſplay an intellect ſo lofty as that of the great Myſtic." That he was, however, a man of extraordinary learning is evinced by a work which he wrote on the coming of Anti-Chriſt, and the ſecond Advent of Our Lord, in order to prove that the numerous legends and prophecies current in that age, as in all times of great calamity and mighty convulſions, were unworthy of credit, and that nothing poſitive was

to be learnt from Holy Scripture reſpecting the date of future events.*

There were many other myſtics in Straſburg at this date, of whom nothing is known beyond their names, but this very fact is ſufficient to prove the wide diffuſion of ſuch doctrines in that city. The ſame phenomenon alſo meets us in a heretical guiſe among the fanatical Beghards who ſince the cloſe of the thirteenth century had filled the Rheniſh provinces with their doctrines of the abſolute freedom of the ſpirit, and the abolition of all diſtinctions between the Creator and the creature. They were denominated (moſt likely by the title of their own chooſing) the Brethren and Siſters of the Free Spirit, and made proſelytes equally among the laity and clergy. In the year 1317, Biſhop Ochſenſtein complains that Alſace was full of them, and in a circular to the clergy of his dioceſe, he condemns the myſtical and pantheiſtic doctrines of this ſect, whoſe members were given over to the ſecular authorities, and by them apparently puniſhed with impriſonment. Whether or no Eckart was connected with them, they do not

* In the firſt part of this treatiſe he cites authorities from the heathen authors to prove the truth of Chriſtianity to thoſe who rejected the Old Teſtament with the New. In the ſecond, he reviews the writings of the Jews, and refutes their doctrines where they are at variance with Chriſtianity. The third, *de Anti-Chriſto ac fine mundi*, contains extracts from the prophecies of Hildegard, Joachim, and other mediæval pſeudo-ſeers, which he treats with contempt. The whole treatiſe exhibits a vaſt amount of reading in the ancient claſſics, as well as the Chriſtian and Jewiſh writers of the Middle Ages. This work was dedicated to Pope John XXII.

ſeem to have exerciſed any influence upon Tauler; for in his ſermons he repeatedly inveighs againſt "the Free Spirits," who he ſays, "ſtriving after a falſe freedom, and on pretext of following the inward light, follow only the inclinations of their own nature."

But beſides the Beghards, there were ſtill lingering in Southern Germany and Italy, remains of the Albigenſes and Waldenſes and Manichean Cathari,—reverers of the Abbot Joachim's Eternal Goſpel of the Holy Ghoſt (that was to overthrow the Goſpel of the Son),—believers in the viſions of the Propheteſs Hildegard,—adherents of the revolutionary Oliva and Fra Dolcino. There were, indeed, many reaſons why hereſies and religious diviſions ſhould abound in theſe regions at this period. Not only was the German Empire, as we ſhall ſoon ſee, torn by political diſſenſions, which in many ways were interwoven with the religious controverſies then afloat, but there was variance between the heads of the Church and its moſt efficient ſervants,—the devoted, hard-working, enthuſiaſtic Franciſcans. The two Mendicant Orders were formed to reclaim for the Papacy her empire over the human mind, which in the twelfth century was threatened on the one hand by the moral purity and elevation of the Albigenſes, who almoſt occupied the faireſt provinces of France, on the other by the learning and civiliſation no leſs than the arms of the Mahometan infidels; and faithfully had they accompliſhed their vocation, by turns refuting heretics by their learning or dazzling them by miracles, outſhining them in aſcetic purity, cruſhing them by the Inquiſition, or winning them by ſelf-

devoted charity. While the higher eccleſiaſtics, above all the Papal court, were enormouſly wealthy, and, with few exceptions, abſorbed in ſecular objects and pleaſures,—the parochial clergy likewiſe often worldly and vicious, generally ignorant and inert, —the wandering friars came among the neglected flocks, rouſed them from the ſleep of ſin, reclaimed the vicious, convinced the ſcoffer, brought hope to the wretched, conſolation to the ſick and dying; and, as a natural reſult, the people were eager to expreſs their gratitude by placing their property in the hands of the Order which had ſhown ſuch zeal for their ſouls. And thus, though forbidden by their original conſtitution to hold property, in a few years the amount of wealth which they accumulated from the bequeſts of the dying was ſo large as to excite the jealousy of the regular clergy, already irritated by the friars' denunciation of worldlineſs, and the tacit cenſure of themſelves implied in the aſcetic lives and burning zeal of their rivals, and they repeatedly demanded the ſuppreſſion of the two Orders.

But within the Orders themſelves had ſoon ſprung up the old ſtrife and diviſion that ſeems to threaten the life of all ſpiritual organizations in the ſecond generation, ariſing from the innate antagoniſm between the ſelf-indulgence, prudence, and acquiſitiveneſs inherent in human nature, and the pure but unreaſoning ſpiritual impulſes to which they have owed their exiſtence. The Dominicans, with their characteriſtic addreſs, retained the conflicting elements within their own boſom, and equally availed themſelves of fervent piety or worldly power. The Franciſcans,

more enthuſiaſtic and leſs far-ſighted, divided into two parties,—thoſe who conſented to hold property in truſt for the ſee of Rome, and thoſe termed Spiritual Franciſcans, who adhered rigidly to the literal interpretation of their rule of abſolute poverty. From the latter ſprang numerous ſpiritual and myſtical ſects, differing in their tenets, but all coinciding in their fervid faith and their inculcation of poverty and aſceticiſm, all democratic as regarded hierarchical authority, and many involving all the wealthy and noble in their hatred to wealth and power. Doctrines of this kind were indeed ſure to find acceptance among the oppreſſed ſerfs and lower claſſes in general; and by their very eſſence the Franciſcans had entirely caſt in their lot with the people. Among theſe ſects the Fratricelli, who flouriſhed at the beginning of this century, foretold the overthrow of the corrupt and carnal Papacy, and the eſtabliſhment of a ſpiritual kingdom ruled over by "the Perfect." The eremitical Cœleſtines, the charitable Beguines, who originally devoted themſelves to works of mercy, the devotional Lollards, nay, probably the brethren and ſiſters of the Free Spirit, ſeem alſo to have been offſhoots from theſe Spiritual Franciſcans.

The Pope now ruling had, however, put himſelf in oppoſition with thoſe of the Spiritual party who remained within the bounds of their Order, and were guilty of no hereſy but that of aſſerting the abſolute poverty of Chriſt and His Apoſtles. He depoſed the General of the Order, and cauſed the inmates of many convents to be perſecuted for maintaining a doctrine which ſtruck at the

root of the Papal authority. In return, they boldly denounced the Pope as a heretic, and became important auxiliaries to the Emperor Louis IV. in that long ſtruggle which occupies the period we are conſidering. They found powerful coadjutors in the profoundly learned and able politicians,—William of Ockham and Marſilio of Padua, whose writings taught men to inveſtigate the origin of the Papal power. But not only from the princes with whom the Pope interfered, and the miſerable populace whoſe paſſions were at the mercy of fanatical preachers or demagogues; from the burghers in the cities there alſo aroſe a ſtrenuous oppoſition to the outrageous claims and the arbitrary tyranny of the hierarchy. This claſs had long been riſing in wealth and importance; and in the earlier half of this fourteenth century they ſucceeded in obtaining a ſhare of the government in nearly all the chief cities of Germany; and the men who had emancipated themſelves from the temporal rule of the Biſhop and his ariſtocracy, and were rejoicing in the freſh air of freedom and the ſenſe of manhood, were not inclined to follow any longer blindly and unqueſtioningly their ſpiritual maſters.

With the double election of Frederic of Auſtria and Louis of Bavaria, who were both crowned on the 25th of November, 1314, at Aix-la-Chapelle, began a deſolating warfare, which laſted for eight years, till the Battle of Muehldorf in 1322 left Frederic a priſoner in the hands of Louis. Straſburg was divided between the rival Emperors. The Biſhop and the important family of

the Zorn were adherents of Frederic; but the no leſs important family of the Muellenheim declared for Louis; and the latter had the greater part of the citizens on their ſide. Thus, when Frederic aſcended the Rhine and arrived in Straſburg in January 1315, he was not received as their ſovereign by the citizens, but merely treated as an illuſtrious gueſt; while, on the contrary, the Biſhop and clergy paid him regal honours, which procured them various proofs of his favour. Louis, on hearing in his camp at Spires the conduct of the citizens, confirmed the liberties and privileges of the city. When, five years later, in Auguſt 1320, Louis came with his army to Straſburg, the burghers ſolemnly tendered him allegiance in the cathedral, in return for which he again confirmed their privileges; but the clergy had ſuſpended the offices of public worſhip, and the greater part of the nobles ſtill ſided with them. On the captivity of Frederic, moſt of the imperial cities of Alſace came over to Louis; but this did not reſtore concord to the afflicted land: for Pope John XXII., bent upon the humiliation of Louis, whoſe popularity and power were ſuch as threatened to render him too independent of the Holy See, now interfered in the affairs of the Empire, and by his perſiſtent refuſal to acknowledge Louis, brought down unſpeakable calamities on Europe, while he ſtirred up the people to a reſiſtance which could not but in the end prove fatal to their reverence for the Papal Chair. So long as the ſtrife laſted between Frederic and Louis, John XXII., while claiming it as his right to decide between them, had refrained from pronouncing any actual deciſion for

either party; but as ſoon as the former was ſubdued, and there was a proſpect of peace, he inſtituted a proceſs againſt the victorious Louis for aſſuming the title of King of the Romans before receiving the Papal ſanction, admoniſhed him to lay down all his powers, and forbade his ſubjects to render further fealty to him. But when in the following year it appeared that the real object of the Pope was to depoſe Louis altogether, and raiſe the King of France to the throne, the Diet aſſembled at Frankfurt declared almoſt unanimouſly for their brave Emperor, in defiance of the unrighteous claims of the Romiſh See. The Pope in return laid all who had acknowledged Louis under interdict in July 1324, from which ſome places were not releaſed for ſix and twenty years. It muſt not be forgotten what this ſentence involved, how intimately its conſequences were felt in every pariſh and every home, when the churches ſtood ſilent and empty for years, the lawleſs and wicked were left unwarned, and the pious deprived of the conſolation of worſhip and the holy communion during all this moſt dark and troubled period. But, in ſpite of its terrors, the German people, and even the greater part of the clergy, took part with their princes, with the exception, however, of the Biſhops of Paſſau and Straſburg. The city of Straſburg, however, remained faithful to Louis, reſiſting by force the officers who attempted to proclaim the Papal fulmination againſt the Emperor, and ſending troops to his aſſiſtance. The Biſhop John von Ochſenſtein died in 1338; but his ſucceſſor, Berthold von Bucheke, trod in his footſteps. Straſburg itſelf, like moſt of

the German cities, took but little heed of the Interdict and the repeated ſentences of excommunication hurled againſt Louis by the Pope. The internal diviſion ſtill continued, headed by the two families of Zorn and Muellenheim, till in 1332 a ſanguinary conteſt took place, which reſulted in the overthrow of the old conſtitution of the city, and the introduction of the craftſmen into the Senate. But the new magiſtrates and the Biſhop remained as much at variance as ever. In 1338, the latter induced his Metropolitan, the Archbiſhop of Mayence, to convene an aſſembly of German Biſhops at Spires, from which the prelates deſpatched an addreſs to the Pope Benedict XII., earneſtly beſeeching him to be reconciled with Louis, and put an end to this lamentable ſtate of diſcord. Their petition was ſupported by envoys from the Eſtates of the Empire, moved thereto by Louis, who declared himſelf ready to yield all obedience to the Holy See which was conſiſtent with God's glory, his own juſt right, and the weal of the Empire. But as, in ſpite of theſe and ſimilar efforts, the Pope continued to preſcribe conditions which made a reconciliation impoſſible, the Biſhop of Straſburg continued to withſtand the Emperor, and do all that lay in his power to injure the imperial cauſe in Alſace. Louis now reſolved to reſort to deciſive meaſures againſt this reſtleſs adverſary, and in 1329 commanded the Rheniſh cities to join the Duke Rudolf of Bavaria and Conrad Lord of Kinkel, in attacking Berthold. The latter, having for allies the Duke of Auſtria, the Count of Wurtemberg, the Biſhop of Baſle, and other nobles, took the field,

beleaguered ſeveral cities of Alſace, and laid waſte the ſurrounding country: his opponents carried repriſals into his territories. Straſburg, wearied out with the miſery cauſed by this never-ceaſing contention, at length declared to the Biſhop that it would no longer yield him obedience unleſs he made peace with the Emperor; and the Prelate, whoſe arms had moreover met with reverſes, and whoſe finances were exhauſted, fearing leſt the other towns of his dioceſe ſhould follow the example of Straſburg, reſolved to do homage to Louis and receive inveſtiture from him, under the reſervation of abſolute obedience to the Pope, while he ſent an envoy to Benedict XII. repreſenting his deſperate condition, and requeſting permiſſion to ſheathe the ſword. Both Emperor and Pope conceded his requeſts; and from this time forward he did all that he could to maintain tranquillity within his biſhopric, which was the more neceſſary, as the controverſy between the Empire and the Papacy grew more envenomed.

After the famous meeting of the Electoral College at Rhenſe, near Coblenz, in July 1338, had declared that the King of the Romans received his dignity and power ſolely from the free choice of the Electors, and the Imperial Diet, held immediately after, had made it a fundamental law of the Empire, that "the imperial dignity is beſtowed directly by God, and he who has been legitimately choſen by the Electoral Princes, becomes thereby King and Emperor without further confirmation by the Pope or any other,"—Louis publiſhed a Manifeſto to all Chriſtendom, refuting at full length the accuſations brought againſt him by the previous

Pope, and proving that the Pope has no authority to ſit in judgment on the Emperor. He further commanded that none ſhould obſerve the papal excommunication and interdict, and ſentenced all thoſe, whether individuals or whole cities and communities, who ſhould continue to ſubmit to the bann, to be deprived of their rights and liberties.

Great was the impreſſion made by this bold Edict upon the German people, who rallied more and more univerſally around the Emperor who thus defended his own rights and the honour of the Empire. But concord was baniſhed further than ever, for the clergy in many caſes reſiſted the Emperor's command to reſume the ſervices which had been ſo long ſuſpended, while the citizens, who had borne with impatience their terrible deprivation of the ſacred rites, now on the ſtrength of the Edict iſſued orders that all the clergy who refuſed to perform ſervice ſhould be baniſhed. Many prieſts left their churches and removed into other provinces, numerous convents ſtood empty of their inmates; ſtill in moſt places there remained a ſufficient number of prieſts and monks to fulfil the duties of their vocation. This was the caſe in Straſburg; the city had already ſuffered all the calamities conſequent on the Interdict: the clergy had ſplit into two parties; the larger number obeyed the Pope's commands; the Auguſtinians eſpecially had for many years ſuſpended the performance of all religious ſervices. The Dominicans and the Franciſcans had availed themſelves of the privilege early granted to their Orders of celebrating maſs during a time of interdict. But now,

when the Emperor ſo openly ſet himſelf in oppoſition to the Pope, they too, terrified by the ſentence of excommunication hanging over them, refuſed in many inſtances to ſay maſs, on which the Senate of Straſburg proclaimed :—

> " Either let them go on to ſing,
> Or out of the city let them ſpring."

The Dominicans in general quitted the city, and Kœnigſhofen relates in his Chronicle, that they left their convent ſtanding empty for more than two years; but no doubt many of the democratical Franciſcans, who had always ſupported the Emperor, remained behind. There were, however, as we ſhall ſee, exceptions in theſe Orders to the general rule, which ſhows to how great an extent the brethren muſt have been guided by their individual conſcience rather than their corporate organization.

Such were the ſcenes amidſt which Tauler was called to labour as a Chriſtian miniſter and Dominican monk. Of the manner in which he fulfilled his work, and the viciſſitudes of his perſonal career, hiſtory has preſerved but a ſmall number of facts, but theſe, though few, are ſignificant. All the teſtimonies that have come down to us reſpecting him, concur in bearing witneſs to the univerſal affection and eſteem with which he was regarded. Even ſo far diſtant as Italy his name was known as a teacher of high repute, who inſiſted on inward piety. The famous Brother Venturini, of Bergamo, who was reſiding at that time under diſgrace in a convent at Marveges, names him in a letter which

he writes to another Dominican in Straſburg, Egenolph von Ehenheim, calling him his beloved John Tauler, and wiſhing to enter into correſpondence with him, becauſe he perceives that "through him and others the name of Chriſt will be ſpread abroad, ever more and more, throughout Germany." Egenolph himſelf was one of theſe "others," who were fellow-workers with Tauler. His early friend, Johann von Dambach, was alſo here at this time.

But the moſt remarkable trait in this period of Tauler's life is that he not only, unlike moſt of his Order, ſided with the Emperor in his whole conteſt with the Pope, but did not ſuſpend his activity when, in 1338, the great ſtruggle came between the abſolutely contradictory commands of his temporal and ſpiritual lords, and, as we have ſeen, his brethren quitted the town, and left their convent deſerted for two years. By the departure of nearly all the clergy from Straſburg, Tauler found a ſtill wider field of labour; and from alluſions to him in letters of his contemporaries, it appears that he did not confine his exertions to that city, but preached from time to time at various places, from Cologne to Baſle. Before the cloſe of 1338 he ſeems to have made a ſomewhat lengthened viſit to the latter city, where the ſtate of things was very ſimilar to that in Straſburg. The Biſhop of Baſle belonged to the opponents of Louis of Bavaria, and made common cauſe with the Biſhop of Straſburg in attacking the adherents of the Emperor in 1339. The citizens again, like thoſe of Straſburg, had remained faithful to

Louis, and had even gone ſo far in their hoſtility to the Pope, that when, in 1330, John XXII. despatched an envoy to publiſh his bull againſt the Emperor, the incenſed mob hurled him, although a prieſt and a dignitary, from the citadel into the river; and, when he tried to ſave himſelf by ſwimming, put out in boats after him and ſlew him. During the Interdict, however, moſt of the clergy, and eſpecially the monks, had forſaken the churches, ſo that in many places the Sacrament had not been adminiſtered for fourteen years; and on the magiſtrates ordering them to reſume their functions the greater part had refuſed to do ſo. About this time, however, the people of Baſle by ſome means prevailed on the Pope to relax the ſeverity of the Interdict for the space of a year.

In Baſle Tauler met with an old friend, Henry of Nordlingen, from whoſe letters moſt of the ſcanty notices of Tauler during this period are derived. He was a prieſt from Conſtance, which city he had been obliged to leave on account of his refuſal to preach; for though a Bavarian by birth, and intimately connected with Tauler and others of ſimilar views, he did not recognize Louis as the lawful Emperor. He is principally known by his correſpondence with a very remarkable woman, Margaretha Ebner, a nun at the Convent of Maria Medingen, in the dioceſe of Augſburg. Her ſiſter Chriſtina was Abbeſs of the Convent of Engenthal, near Nuremberg. Both were diſtinguiſhed by their mental endowments as well as their earneſt piety, and were evidently held in great reſpect by Tauler, Suſo,

and others of that party. They ſeem alſo to have taken up a very decided poſition amidſt the eccleſiaſtical commotions of their age, and were zealous partizans of Louis. Chriſtina, famous for her viſions, in one of her trances ſees the Romiſh Church in the likeneſs of a magnificent Cathedral, the doors of which are, however, cloſed by reaſon of the Interdict. The ſinging of the prieſts within is heard; a crowd of people are ſtanding round, but dare not enter. On a ſudden a man in the garb of a preaching friar comes up to the nun, and tells her that he will give her words wherewith to conſole the forſaken multitude; and this man is Chriſt.

Tauler occaſionally viſited both theſe nuns, and was in correſpondence with Margaretha*, whom he urges to write down her viſions reſpecting the ſtate of Chriſtendom and the friends of God. For him they had a deep veneration, and conſtantly call him "our dear Father Tauler." Chriſtina learns, in one of her revelations, that he is "the holieſt of God's children now living on earth," that "the spirit of God breathes through him, as ſweet muſic through a lute;" Margaret ſpeaks, too, ſometimes of the joy that ſhe has had in the preſence of this great friend of God, and how hard it has been to part with him. She appears to have ſtood rather in the relation of a wiſe Chriſtian friend and counſellor, than of a spiritual child,

* Only one ſhort letter, however, has been preſerved, from having been placed among thoſe of Henry of Nordlingen, and it is too unimportant for inſertion.

to Henry of Nordlingen, who from his letters ſeems to have been a man of gentle, pious ſpirit, more fitted for a quiet contemplative life than for the energetic activity required by the troublous times in which his lot was caſt. He, like Tauler, was filled with anguiſh at the ſight of the diſtreſs of thoſe around him; but while Tauler's grief ſtirred him up to vigorous efforts in their behalf, and his courage and energy roſe with the emergency, the timid and heſitating Henry was unable to ſurmount the difficulties in which he found himself involved, and the greater the preſſure of the times, the greater was his perplexity and longing for peace. Yet, when his ſcrupulous conſcience allowed him to preach, his labours appear to have been fruitful in reſult. This was the caſe during Tauler's viſit to Baſle, where he had previouſly been ſojourning for ſome time in inactivity, after long wandering and much diſtreſs.*

When the Pope allowed public worſhip to be celebrated for a year at Baſle, Henry's friends, without his knowledge, procured him permiſſion to preach, and give a forty days' indulgence; and he then ventured to appear in public, en-

* His letters give a lively picture of the real dangers to which his politics expoſed him. Thus he ſays, "I have been called before the princes of this world, who have proſcribed me, ſo that there is no place of ſafety for me in this land, unleſs I would conſent to perform maſs." Again, he would come to Margaretha, but "I may not as yet dare to appear openly in this "land." "If the Emperor ſhould leave the country, perhaps I might be able to ſee thee, if it "were God's will." "At Conſtance and in the neighbouring country the prieſts have been everywhere ordered to ſing maſs, ſo that I do not know where I ſhall be able to remain."

couraged by Tauler's influence and counſel. Thus he ſays:— "Afterwards I came to Baſle, to my and thy dear faithful Father Tauler (who was with me at thy houſe), and he helped me in every way he could with all fidelity." He then writes: "The "great mercy has been granted us that we may celebrate maſs in "public, with the Pope's permiſſion; and now do the hungry ſouls "come with great deſire to receive the Lord's body, which they "have not been able to enjoy for fourteen years in Chriſtian "obedience. And now I entreat you, with ſpecial earneſtneſs, "that you pray to God for all those whom I feed with His Body, "that we may receive His Holy Sacrament in His love, and "adminiſter it to His eternal glory, and the conſolation of all "Chriſtian ſouls." He now preached every day, and often twice a day, beſides performing maſs daily; and ſo many of all claſſes ſtreamed to confeſs to him that he was overwhelmed with his duties, and writes to his friend: "If I could manage it, I would "gladly come to you; but I am not my own. I am the pro- "perty of the whole Chapter, and the moſt important pariſhes. "The people at Baſle are not willing that I ſhould leave them, "neither, indeed, ſhould I have courage to travel openly about "the country; for I ſhould be at the mercy of any ruffian or "thief, and if aught befell me, no complaint would be laid "againſt him. Still I truſt in the Lord that He will ſuffer me "to ſee thee, my heart's true conſolation.' But ſome months later he writes: 'Methought I clung too much and with too "carnal feelings to the eaſe, the luxurious and pleaſant ſociety,

" and the earthly comforts that I enjoyed at Baſle. In truth I " knew not that I did ſo while I had them, but felt it fully when " I forſook them. Beſides, I perceived in my heart, through " many ſuggeſtions and admonitions, that my labours might be " more needed elſewhere than at Baſle, and ſo I ventured my " departure for the ſake of Chriſt and his flock, and have ex- " changed the marvellouſly holy and pleaſant and acceptable ſo- " ciety there for all manner of diſcomfort to my inward and " outward man, by night and by day; ſo that now I muſt per- " force retreat into myſelf, and take refuge in my only conſolation, " Chriſt Jeſus, if I were unwilling to do ſo before."

By the perſuaſion of Tauler, Henry appears now for a time to have preached even in places which ſtill lay under the Interdict, but afterwards, terrified by the violent cenſure of the clergy for his conduct, to have ſubmitted again to the papal prohibition, and reſumed his wanderings. Tauler, on the contrary, waited for no papal permiſſion to do that which he conſidered to be the bounden duty of a clergyman, and after his viſit to Baſle it appears from Henry's letters that he travelled more than once as far as Cologne. In this city, where Maſter Eckart had ſpent the latter years of his life, numerous preachers had gone forth from his ſchool, who continued to promulgate his doctrines with more or leſs ability and originality. Nicolas of Straſburg, too, was at this time lecturing at Cologne, probably driven from Straſburg by the troubles to which his papal politics would expoſe him at this period. This was the caſe alſo with Tauler's old friend, Johann

von Dambach, who had not only declared that during the Interdict it was the duty of a pious Chriſtian to ſubmit unconditionally to the Church, but even compoſed ſeveral tractates to prove the juſtifiableneſs of the Interdict from the Canon law. Yet, as we have ſeen Tauler and the Ebners in undiſturbed friendſhip with Henry of Nordlingen, in ſpite of differences which entered ſo deeply into the life of thoſe times, ſo, notwithſtanding Dambach's antagoniſtic opinions, and his removal to the diſtant Prague*, the connection between him and Tauler was not broken off, as is proved by the circumſtance, that after 1350 he ſent his book, "*De ſenſibilibus deliciis paradiſi*," to their Alma Mater, the College of St. Jacques, in Paris, in their joint names.

We now arrive at the date when that great change was produced in Tauler with which the foregoing "Hiſtory" has acquainted us. Till recently, little was known of the "Hiſtory," beyond the fact that it was found attached to ſome MSS. of Tauler's ſermons, and many have doubted of its genuineneſs. Quétif and Echard, for inſtance, have treated it as a mere allegory. By dint of laborious reſearches among the old MSS. of the libraries of Straſburg and Sarnen, and ingenious combinations of the reſults thence obtained, Profeſſor Schmidt has not only eſtabliſhed, in a way that it ſeems to me muſt be ſatisfactory to any one who goes through the evidence, that this Tractate is a per-

* He was made Profeſſor at the newly-eſtabliſhed Univerſity there in 1347.

fectly genuine and truthful production, the work of the layman who profeſſes to have written it, but alſo has ſucceeded in identifying this layman with a myſterious perſonage, called the Great Friend of God, in the Oberland, the head of a ſecret religious aſſociation; and the latter again, with a certain Nicolas of Baſle, whoſe name, however, only occurs twice; once in the account of his own martyrdom, once in that of one of his diſciples.

The moſt important of the MSS. examined by Profeſſor Schmidt is a large folio volume, only recently diſcovered in the archives of Straſburg, and formerly belonging to the Convent of the Knights of St. John in that city, called a *Briefbuch* [book of letters], and is for the moſt part a collection of letters and papers left by Rulman Merſwin, the founder of the convent. This Rulman Merſwin was a friend of Tauler (who was for ſome time his confeſſor), and, in the latter part of his life, of the "Layman," Nicolas, by whoſe advice he built a houſe for the Brethren of St. John, on an iſland at Straſburg called the Gruenen-Worth (*green meadow*), and with whom he was in conſtant correſpondence up to the time of his death in 1382. Several portions of this extremely curious *Briefbuch* were carefully copied into the archives of the convent, forming what is called its *Memorial*,* but the codex itſelf did not belong to the public archives of the

* The documents relating to the founders of the houſe are ſo called. Of this *Memorial* four copies are known to exiſt.

houſe, being kept ſecret from all but a few, on account of the private letters and notes contained in it, and therefore treaſured up with peculiar care. So late as the ſeventeenth century, this was ſtill the caſe, and a reader of that period has traced on the outer covering of the Codex the words: "*liber iſte religiose cuſtodiendus.*" The documents of which it conſiſts were arranged, and moſt of them copied out, by Nicolas von Laufen, who (according to a few notices of himſelf, which he has inſerted at the cloſe of the *Briefbuch*) ſeems to have accompanied Rulman Merſwin as his ſecretary, on taking poſſeſſion of the newly-built Gruenen-Worth in 1366, and a few years later to have become a prieſt of the order of St. John. The codex contains among other leſs important matter, a MS. called "*The Book of the Five Men,*" being an account of Nicolas and his four companions, in the handwriting of Nicolas himſelf; twenty-two of his letters, apparently copied by Nicolas von Laufen, and the original MS. of Rulman Merſwin's account of the firſt four years of his religious hiſtory, in his own handwriting. Thus, after a lapſe of five hundred years, we are able to learn more about this extraordinary half-mythical "Friend of God in the Oberland," than his very contemporaries knew.

From theſe documents we are able to obtain a general idea of the character and work of Nicholas, though the actual courſe of his hiſtory, eſpecially during the earlier part of his life, is ſtill almoſt entirely ſhrouded from view. All that we can diſcover reſpecting the commencement of his career is, that about the year

1328 or 1330, he was a youth of good family at Baſle*, wealthy, univerſally eſteemed, and poſſeſſed of abilities that enſured him ſucceſs in all that he undertook. Nevertheleſs, he was unhappy, from the conſciouſneſs of his ſinfulneſs and ignorance of divine things. Being, as a layman, uninſtructed in Holy Scripture, he ſought to maſter religious truths by the exerciſe of his reaſon; but his efforts to obtain ſatisfaction were in vain. For years he ſtruggled with his own intellectual difficulties and the temptations of the world. One day, as he was meditating on the tranſitory nature of all earthly things and the rapid flight of time, the thoughtleſſneſs, ſinfulneſs, and thorough forgetfulneſs of God in all thoſe around him were preſented in ſuch vivid colours to his mind, that it ſeemed inconceivable to him how man could take any delight in this vain world; and then, as the thought of his own waſted time roſe to his remembrance, he was filled with ſuch bitter remorſe that he reſolved from that moment to renounce the world and dedicate his life to God. To this end, as we have ſeen†, he read the lives of the ſaints and imitated their auſterities. This diſcipline he had carried on for five years before he found peace in the way he deſcribes in the "Hiſtory." He afterwards ſet himſelf to ſtudy the Scriptures (no doubt in Latin), and ſays that in a ſpace of thirty weeks he had come to be able

* The place of his abode is not certain, but inferred from the dialect of the Tractate found in his own handwriting. See Schmidt's *Gottesfreunde*. S. 32.

† See p. 20.

to underſtand it as thoroughly, and "ſpeak as good grammar, "as if he had ſtudied all his days in the beſt Univerſities;" which extraordinary facility of acquiſition he refers to ſpecial divine aſſiſtance. We know no more of him till we find him at the head of a ſociety of "Friends of God," who live with him in utter ſecluſion from the world, and form the ſecret centre of a wide circle of religious activity, unconnected with any recognized order, but yet not overſtepping the pale of the Church.

The title of "Friends of God" is one which meets us continually in the writings of thoſe who are termed myſtics in the fourteenth century, and is uſed in various connections. Sometimes it ſeems to denote thoſe who were partakers of a ſpiritual in oppoſition to a formaliſtic piety; ſometimes to denote the members of a particular body. Among thoſe called "Friends of God" we find the names of individuals widely differing from each other in rank, vocation, opinion, and career; for they counted among their members Dominicans, ſuch as Eckart, Tauler, Suſo of Conſtance, and Henry of Nordlingen, and Franciſcans, ſuch as Otto of Paſſau; Knights married and ſingle; nuns like Chriſtina and Margaretha Ebner, and a Queen, Agnes the widow of King Andrew of Hungary; the rich banker, Rulman Merſwin, and Conrad, the Abbot of Kaiſerſheim in Bavaria, who boaſts, in a letter to Henry of Nordlingen, that he has not accepted the Biſhop of Augſburg's abſolution either for himſelf or his monaſtery; Conrad Brunſberg, again, the Grand-Maſter of the Knights of St. John in Germany, beſides the layman, Nicolas

of Baſle, and the great myſtical author of the Netherlands, Ruyſbroeck. The appellation common to all theſe, with numbers of leſs diſtinguiſhed perſons, would ſeem to have been uſed among themſelves to denominate thoſe who could not but feel that they were more alive to the realities of religion and its ſpiritual nature than was the caſe with the multitude around them. That thoſe poſſeſſing common ſympathies on the ſubjects of higheſt import, ſhould inſtinctively ſeek out and cling to each other, and thus an aſſociation ſhould ſpontaneouſly grow up, even without any definite plan, is a natural and inevitable proceſs, where a real, deep religious life has arrived at ſelf-conſciouſneſs; and from a compariſon of the paſſages in which Tauler and Henry of Nordlingen uſe the term "Friends of God," it appears to me that in the firſt inſtance the ſenſe of having entered into a living, perſonal union with God, bringing with it a yearning pity for ſinners, and a fervent deſire to bring them to the ſame bleſſed ſtate, was the ſole diſtinction and bond of the "Friends of God."

It is at all events clear that their union for common action was utterly independent of the attitude they aſſumed towards the great conflicting queſtions of the day; for, as we have ſeen in the Abbot of Kaiſerſheim, and Henry of Nordlingen, thoſe are called "Friends of God," and treat each other as brethren, who are as far aſunder in their politics as the Chartiſts and High Tories of our own days. Neither did they form a ſect, but, on the contrary, repudiated the idea, as is ſhewn by the following paſſage from Tauler's ſermon on the twenty-ſecond Sunday after Trinity, which I think, too,

confirms this view of their origin. "The prince of this world "has now-a-days been ſowing brambles among the roſes in all "directions, inſomuch that the roſes are often choked, or ſorely "torn by the brambles. Children, there muſt needs be a flight or a "diſtinction; ſome ſort of a ſeparation, whether within the cloiſ-"ters or without, and it does not make them into a ſect, that the "'Friends of God' profeſs to be unlike the world's friends." The remark that the "Friends of God" were not a ſect, would ſeem to prove that this accuſation was brought againſt them; but, indeed, proof of this would ſeem ſuperfluous, for then, as in all other times, it would infallibly happen that the unworldly and ſpiritual-minded, who recognized a nobler ſort of religion than that compriſed in the due obſervance of religious rites and decent moral conduct, ſhould be charged with ſectarianiſm and ſuſpected of hereſy, even if they broached no new dogmas, and went no farther than to bring out in their teaching and practice the real ſignificance of the Church's ordinances.

But the greater the ſinfulneſs and deadneſs to religion in a particular age, the more ſtrongly marked muſt be the line of demarcation between the careleſs and the earneſt; for the religious are thus obliged to abſtain from pleaſures and occupations which, innocent in themſelves, have become corrupt. At the ſame time, too, the danger of enthuſiaſm, and miſtaking one's own natural emotions for direct Divine influence, will be greateſt when ſuch influences, known to be real by the pious, are altogether denied by the world in general. Illuſtrations will inſtantly

ſuggeſt themſelves to the mind of the reader from the experience of our own Church in the times of Weſley and Whitfield; and in like manner, amidſt the univerſal deadneſs of the Lutheran Church in the ſeventeenth century, aroſe the Pietiſtic movement of Spener and Franke. Thus the great wickedneſs, eſpecially of the clergy, the contentions and dreadful cataſtrophes which mark the firſt half of the fourteenth century, would impel the pious to come out from the world, and ſtimulate them to ſpecially earneſt and direct efforts to enkindle the religious life of the people. And ſo, during the terrors of the Interdict, they ſeem to have formed an aſſociation with no declared boundary, yet whoſe boundaries would be moſt diſtinctly recognized by all who were within the line. To the name they adopted, the text John xv. 15. ſeems to have given occaſion; for Tauler ſays: "Then ſaid our Lord to His diſciples, 'From henceforth I call you "'not ſervants, but friends.' The 'henceforth' that he ſpoke was "from the time when they had forſaken all things and followed "Him. Then were they his friends, and not ſervants; and there-"fore he who will be a true friend of God muſt leave all things and "follow after Him." From this paſſage, in the ſpirit of which many others concur, we ſee at once in what the right to this title conſiſted—namely, in the thorough ſelf-ſurrender to God, the forſaking all things to follow God alone.

But while this principle, which ſurely we muſt recognize as that which does really conſtitute the friends of God in all ages, was brought out into peculiar prominence by theſe German

Gottesfreunde, their views could not fail to be coloured by the modes of thought and the circumstances of their age. Thus, in order to this entire devotedness to God, we find a renunciation, so far as may be, of all earthly cares and ties recommended by them; thus, too, we see that their faith in God's direct, personal dealings with the individual soul is apt to be accompanied by a superstitious regarding of insignificant phenomena, or even the mere effects of an over-active fancy, as a positive intimation of His will. Some of us, too, would be inclined to think that their continual insisting on the duty of passively yielding up the soul to divine influences, and their exhortations to take all outward things as from God, would involve a danger of falling into an indolent quietism. But the fact, far from justifying our expectations, would afford another proof that when we leave off trying to do the work that God will do Himself, we shall find our energies all the more vigorous to accomplish that which He has set us to do; for instead of regarding the events around them with passive indifference, like many of the earlier ascetics, they believed themselves called to exercise a very positive influence on the course of events.

This was in a special sense the case with Nicolas of Basle and his immediate companions, whom we find, from the recently discovered documents, to have entertained plans for the extension of religion and the reform of Christendom of a wider nature than it was safe to disclose even to their brethren indiscriminately, at a time when the Dominican inquisitors (who, moreover, were of the

Papal, while moſt of the "Friends of God" were of the Imperial party) were actively engaged in hunting out heretics, eſpecially thoſe who might betray any leaning to the democratic and reformatory tendencies of the Spiritual Franciſcans and their cognate ſects. Thus the knot of men who gathered round Nicolas as their centre, ſeem, as compared with the Gottesfreunde at large, to have formed a church within a church, having ſecret ſchemes into which the others were not initiated.

From hints of ſuch private ſchemes ſcattered in the writings of Rulman Merſwin and "the Layman," it was formerly imagined that the latter at any rate was a ſecret Waldenſian; but this idea is not confirmed by more extended reſearch; on the contrary, the importance which he and his friends attach to the rites of the Church,—to obedience to eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors,—their belief in tranſubſtantiation and purgatory, &c., are quite inconſiſtent with it. Indeed, the views of Nicolas ſeem to have been much more in uniſon with the doctrine of the Church than thoſe of Eckart and his ſchool. The only peculiarity of his *belief*, that I can diſcover, is his ſtrong confidence in the reality of the viſions and miraculous revelations imparted to himſelf and his friends; and it muſt be remembered that even this peculiarity he not only ſhares in common with the great Luther, who lived two centuries later, and with the liberal and ſagacious Weſley, almoſt in our own days, but that his ſpiritual childhood had been nurtured on the legends of the ſaints, with all their marvels; and that we ſee, from the hiſtory of his times, that miracles and revelations were

of every-day occurrence, at all events among the Franciſcans and ſectarians. The ſecret of the extraordinary ſway which Nicolas obtained, not only over laymen leſs inſtructed and prieſts leſs thinking than himſelf, but even over a man of ſuch commanding intellect as Tauler, ſeems to me to lie in the intenſe glow of his piety, the utter ſelf-devotion of his own life, his force of will, and his real ſpiritual inſight. Not only did he ſtand immeaſurably below Tauler in point of learning, but his letters, while affording many traits of ſpiritual wiſdom and acute practical ſense, exhibit neither the reflective nor imaginative power of Tauler's writings. Yet the accompliſhed ſcholar, the experienced paſtor, the fearleſs politician, reſigns himſelf implicitly to the guidance of the obſcure layman as his inconteſtible ſuperior.

The criſis which Nicolas was the means of bringing about in Tauler's life is commonly termed a converſion; but from all that we have read of his previous life, it seems clear that it cannot be regarded as what is ordinarily meant by that term. Before it took place Tauler was already a ſincere, God-fearing, active Chriſtian miniſter, and recognized as their "Father" and leader by the "Friends of God" ſcattered up and down Switzerland, Bavaria, and the Rheniſh ſtates. Neither can I diſcover any converſion, properly ſpeaking, in point of doctrinal opinions. Nicolas agrees to all he taught as very good, and blames, not his preaching, but his life. Surely, therefore, this notable change is to be regarded in the light in which Tauler himſelf regarded it; as the coming to a deeper, more

real and practical experience of the things of God. It ſeems, that with all his ſincere piety, and hatred of ſin, and abhorrence of the evil world around him, Tauler had never come to a clear conſciouſneſs of all the depths of ſin concealed in his own heart, or an apprehenſion of the full import of the utter ſelf-ſurrender to God which he preached. Such a deficiency of ſelf-knowledge is indeed more poſſible with a conſcientious man of Tauler's character, pure and gentle by nature, than with one of the oppoſite, or more ſtormy type. It is true that the taſk which God lays upon all is the ſame—the unceaſing ſurrender of their own wiſhes to the higher aims which He ſets ſucceſſively before them. But with men of paſſionate temperament and ſelfiſh habits, who are therefore at every turn expoſed by circumſtances to violent temptation, their natural wiſhes are, for the moſt part, ſo obviouſly ſinful that, though the ſtruggle of renouncing them may be hard, the duty of doing ſo is clear and preſſing. And when ſuch turn to God, their falls in attempting the Chriſtian walk are often frequent enough, or at leaſt their battles with temptation ſevere enough, to teach them the evil and weakneſs of their own heart. With men, on the other hand, of calm, pure, and affectionate diſpoſition, and trained in conſcientious habits, ſo many of their wiſhes are for things harmleſs, or even good in themſelves, that it is leſs eaſy to ſee why and how they are to be given up. Such men, juſt, kindly, and finding much of their own happineſs in that of others, live, for the moſt part, in harmonious relations with thoſe around them, and have little to diſturb their conſciences,

beyond the fear of falling ſhort in the path of duty on which they have already entered. But they are expoſed to many perils, more inſidious, becauſe leſs ſtartling, than thoſe which beſet their more fiercely-tempted brethren. They are in danger of depending too much on the reſpect and love which others ſo readily yield them; of valuing themſelves on a purity which, if ever one of ſtruggle, has come to be one of taſte; of prizing intellectual clearneſs above moral inſight and vigour; of miſtaking the pleaſure they feel in the performance of duty, for real ſubmiſſion to the will of God; and above all, of ſhrinking from new truths which would, for the time, confuſe their belief, and break up the calm ſymmetry of their lives. The greater danger to the Chriſtian life ariſing from thoſe hidden heart-ſins, than even from ſinful acts which inſtantly wound the conſcience, is a truth which Tauler inſiſts upon in his ſermons ſo ſtrongly and ſo often, nay, ſometimes almoſt to exaggeration, that one could not but gueſs that he was ſpeaking from his own experience, even had we not the certainty of it from the "Hiſtory." For, as he often declares, different natures require and receive a very different diſcipline from God. Sometimes it is by outward affliction that God ſpeaks to ſouls thus ſinking into the lethargy of formaliſm; and the loſs of friends, or health, or influence ſuddenly ſeems to cut off, as it were, half their means of ſerving Him, and to rouſe long-forgotten temptations to riſe up againſt His will. Sometimes, on the other hand, He ſpeaks to them inwardly, by opening their eyes to heights of holineſs, which they had never before ſteadily

contemplated. They now ſuddenly perceive that many of the fancied duties which have till now occupied their lives, and ſatisfied their conſciences, have long ceaſed to be duties, and have come to be mere habits or pleaſures; and that while they have been thus living in ſelf-love, unſeen and unrepented-of, they might have been coming to the knowledge of the higher obligations to which they have been ſo blind, but which were all implied in their firſt belief, if they had but continued to read it with a ſingle eye. Thus they are weighed down by preſent temptations to which they have long been ſtrangers. For, in order to follow the new light granted to them, they muſt give up long-cheriſhed aims; relinquiſh many opportunities of doing good, and even, it may ſeem, the very faculties for uſing them; and ſacrifice, not only the good opinion of the world, but the truſt and affection of many who are deareſt to them. They ſhrink from ſuch renunciation; and then come doubt and perplexity to add to the bitterneſs of the ſtruggle. Can it be right to abandon ſo much that is good and worthy in itſelf, can it be the voice of God that ſummons them to do this, or is it not rather a ſelf-willed fancy of their own? No: for conſcience cannot be miſtaken when it tells us of ſin, though it is inſufficient to reveal to us duty—and this fierce clinging to their own wiſhes, what is it but the ſame obſtinate reſiſtance to the will of God, which they have been accuſtomed to blame, nay, even wonder at, in the vicious and criminal, whom they have perhaps been ſeeking to reclaim? Such a ſtruggle, it ſeems, was that which Tauler had to paſs through before he

could fully apprehend or be fitted for the work which God had for him to do. And ſurely, without ſome ſuch ſtruggle, none can keep long in the right path. For the path to life does not ſtretch acroſs the levels of habit, but winds up the heights of aſpiration, and at every freſh ſtep in the aſcent a wider horizon of duty opens to the view.

I will not mar the impreſſion of the touching narrative given by Tauler himſelf by tranſlating the ſtory it relates into any weaker words, but leave it to make its own way to the heart of thoſe who have hearts to underſtand it. There may be ſome who are unable to find within the range of their own experience and obſervation any key which can make it ſound to them like reality and common ſenſe, yet conſidering the practical energy and clear judgment of Tauler in other parts of his life, it may ſurely be worth their pains to ſtudy what he conſidered of ſo much importance with reverent and ſelf-diſtruſtful diligence, rather than reject it at once as the mere product of a heated fancy.

It ſeems moſt likely that the attention of Nicolas had firſt been drawn to Tauler during the ſtay of the latter with Henry of Nordlingen, in Baſle, in 1338; for, according to one of the beſt MSS. of the "Hiſtory," the Layman ſays, "I have heard much of your doctrine in my own country." Conſidering what we know of his previous hiſtory, and the accuſation of Nicolas that he relied too much on his ſcholarſhip, it ſeems highly probable that Tauler may hitherto have been ſomewhat influ-

enced by the caſt of thought derived from his Maſter Eckart, in whoſe writings the power of Knowing is ſo highly exalted that it ſometimes is made to take precedence of the faculty of Love. That Nicolas ſhould, after hearing Tauler preach a few times, have been able to penetrate his ſpiritual condition and detect its great imperfection, would not appear to imply anything miraculous, but to be merely a rare, though by no means ſingular, inſtance of the fine ſpiritual inſtinct ſometimes found in men themſelves of extraordinary religious attainments. Tauler ſhows us what he conſiders to have been the value of Nicolas to himſelf when he ſays, "Therefore for ſuch as deſire to live for the truth, it is a great aſſiſtance to have a Friend of God, to whom they ſubmit themſelves, and who guides them by the Spirit of God. It were well worth their while to go a hundred leagues to ſeek out an experienced Friend of God, who knows the right path and can direct them in it."*

The two years of ſilence, which muſt have been ſuch a terrible trial to Tauler's faith and obedience, were compenſated, not only by inward growth, as is always the caſe with ſuch trials, but by the evident increaſe of his outward uſefulneſs, ſo that he found the truth of Nicolas' aſſurance, that one of his ſermons would bring forth more fruit now than a hundred had before. His preaching is diſtinguiſhed from that of moſt of his brethren

* Firſt Sermon on the Birth of the Virgin [No. 127 of the Frankfort Edition, 1826].

among the "Friends of God," by its more ſearching application of religious principles to the moral queſtions ariſing in the various emergencies of inward experience and outward life. How much more widely ſtill muſt it have differed from that of the ordinary preachers, who ſought to captivate the educated by the refinements of ſcholaſtic logic, employed on queſtions of no uſe but to diſplay their own ingenuity, or to entertain the vulgar by marvellous ſtories of wonder-working ſaints or demons,—when in ſimple earneſt language he appealed to the conſciences of his hearers, and then ſhowed them the way of eſcape from the wretchedneſs of their ſinful lives to the peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding. And when he taught them that they muſt forſake the creature and cleave to God alone, it was no ſelfiſh ſhutting up of the heart within the narrow ſphere of its own emotions and experiences which he preached, for he is continually admoniſhing to works of love, and ever places human duties on their true level, meaſuring their value not by the nature of the act, but by the obedience and love involved in its performance. "One can ſpin," he ſays, "another can make ſhoes; and all "theſe are gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. I tell you, if I were not a "prieſt, I would eſteem it a great gift that I was able to make "ſhoes, and would try to make them ſo well as to be a pattern to "all." "The meaſure with which we ſhall be meaſured, is the "faculty of love in the ſoul,—the will of a man; by this ſhall all "his words and works and life be meaſured. . . ."

But that which ſeems to me the moſt ſtriking characteriſtic

of Tauler's ſermons is his profound ſympathy with the ſpirit of Chriſt's life, eſpecially with his infinite ſorrow over the ſins of others. This is, indeed, a characteriſtic of the "Friends of God" in general, but is expreſſed with greater force and beauty in Tauler than in the other writers of the ſame ſchool. In this ſenſe they ſpecially deſerve the title which they aſſumed; for, more than any other claſs of religious writers with whom I am acquainted, do they ſeem to have entered into that intenſe appreciation of the evil of ſin, mingled with endleſs grief and compaſſion for its ſlaves, which could overwhelm the Saviour's mind with agony.

It is true that a large proportion of his ſermons are addreſſed to the inmates of cloiſters, and have ſpecial reference to their peculiar requirements and dangers. But we muſt remember that he lived in an age when the ſocial relations were in a ſtate of diſorganization; and in thoſe times of general diſtreſs and perplexity, when the outward miniſtrations of the Church and the means of obtaining religious inſtruction were often cut off for long together, the number of thoſe who retired into convents had become very large. There were great numbers, too, of laymen and women, who, without entering any Order, withdrew from the world and formed communities or unions (called Sammenungen), dwelling together without any monaſtic rules, yet differing little in their mode of life from the regular monks. Tauler often refers to theſe communities in his ſermons. Their members generally choſe Dominicans or Franciſcans for their

confeſſors, and a great number of this claſs appear to have attached themſelves to Tauler. They found in him, however, a ſevere cenſor of the faults to which their recluſe life rendered them peculiarly liable,—the relying on outward acts of piety, deſpiſing thoſe who are outſide, killing the body, which is God's inſtrument, with auſterities, or allowing themſelves to waſte their time and fill their minds with trivialities, while imagining the fact of their being "religious" to make them ſafe.

He is ſaid by Specklin to have made the reformation of the lives of the clergy a ſpecial object of his efforts. The ſtatutes paſſed for the regulation of their conduct by a ſynod convened by Biſhop Berthold in 1335, for the purpoſe of removing abuſes, gives a lively picture of the inordinate covetouſneſs, and utter neglect of the duties of their vocation, which prevailed among the clergy of Straſburg at this time. It is the more remarkable, that the Biſhop ſhould have found it neceſſary to take ſuch ſtrong meaſures during the ſolemn period of the Interdict, when the very ſtruggle in which the clergy were engaged with the civil power, might have been expected at leaſt to rouſe them to lead a more decorous and ſober life. From the ſtatutes of this ſynod, we ſee that the clergy not unfrequently alienated the property of the Church to laymen, or borrowed money at high intereſt from the Jews, in order to gratify their propenſity to oſtentation and pleaſure. There were even ſome who entered into trade. The younger and more wealthy eſpecially diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their extreme fondneſs for diſplay, and the Biſhop complains that,

inſtead of going about clad with due decorum in the proper prieſtly garb, they allowed their hair to grow long in order to conceal the tonſure, wore boots of red, yellow, and green, and adorned their coats with gold lace and gay ribbons; that they ſtrutted about in the ſtreets equipped with rapiers and ſwords, attended tournaments, frequented the public taverns, and were the moſt jovial of boon-companions at the drinking-bouts of the laymen. In ſome of the more wealthy nunneries, too, things had come to ſuch a pitch, that the ladies dreſſed magnificently, took part in the amuſements of the tournament, and even danced with laymen in their taverns. In reference to ſuch, Tauler ſays: "If we look "around us, we ſee that the greater part of the world are enemies "of God; and among theſe we muſt account certain who are "ſervants of God by conſtraint, who muſt be forced to do any "ſervices for Him, and the little that they do is not done out of "love or devotion, but ſimply out of fear. . . . They are com-"mon hired ſervants of God; and ſuch are all thoſe prieſts and "nuns and the like, who take up a religious life for the ſake of "revenues and fees, and if they were not ſecure of theſe, they "would not ſerve God at all, but turn round altogether, and con-"ſort with the enemies of God. Thus they ſeek their own "pleaſure in dainty fare, dreſs, jewels, vanity, and the admira-"tion of others, wherever they can find it. Nay, verily, at "laſt they muſt have a ſpouſe. 'Ah, dear Lord,' they ſay, 'it "is no harm; it is a ſpiritual love. We muſt enjoy ourſelves "a little; we muſt have ſome recreation; we cannot do with-

"out it. See, dear Lord, we are ſpiritual people, we are in "an Order.' But put on as many cowls and hoods as thou "wilt, they will help thee nothing, if thou doeſt not what thou "oughteſt of right to do. There was once a man who fell "into ſin, and he put on a cowl, but did not give up his ſin. "The Devil came and took the man, and tore him into a hun- "dred pieces, and left the cowl whole, but carried off the man, "body and ſoul, to the amazement of all beholders. Therefore "take heed to yourſelves, knowing how full the world is of ſuch "bargainers with God, among monks and nuns."*

Tauler's denunciations of this claſs brought him, of courſe, many enemies among the clergy, who hated the ſtrictneſs of his principles and conduct; and they ſtrove in various ways to diſtort his words, in order to find grounds for accuſation againſt him. Thus he ſays,—"Children, I muſt tell you in love, "that I am unjuſtly accuſed of having declared that I would hear "no one's confeſſion unleſs he firſt promiſed me to do everything "that I wiſhed. That is a very unjuſt word: 'what I wiſhed.' "I wiſh no one to do anything beyond that which is written, "and I beg no man to promiſe me more than that."† He had alſo to defend himſelf againſt more ſerious charges, for his enemies not only ridiculed him for making ſo much of the inward work, but called him and his followers unorthodox innovators. Thus

* Sermon for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

† Sermon on Aſſumption Day [No. 125. of the Frankfort Edition, 1826].

he ſays: "But if one come and warn them of the horrible danger "in which they are living, and what a fearful death they are like "to die, they mock at him, and ſay he is a Beghard, or belongs "to the New Spirit, ſcoffing at him and ſlandering him worſe "than ever was done to the Chriſtians by Jews or heathens. "Theſe falſe Chriſtians contemn us far more, crying out, 'Here "comes one of the New Spirit;' 'Theſe are they of the lofty "ſpirits.'"* It is even related that the clergy, enraged at the charges he brought againſt them, on one occaſion forbade his preaching (which undoubtedly was in itſelf an act of diſobedience to the Interdict), but that the magiſtrates obliged them to reſcind their prohibition.

Meanwhile, however, Tauler's efforts for their amendment were not wholly fruitleſs, for it is recorded that through him "many prieſts became quite pious;" while by the people at large he was revered and affectionately beloved, and "whatever "weighty matter the people had to do, he was called in to "ſettle it with his wiſdom . . . and whatever he counſelled "them was right in their eyes." The "Friends of God" naturally attached themſelves more ſtrongly than ever to him, and about this time he ſeems to have been the means of adding a notable adherent to their numbers, in the banker, Rulman Merſwin, who was at a later period the founder of the

* Second Sermon for the Third Sunday after Trinity.

Gruenen-Worth, and author of the "Book of the Nine Rocks," a very remarkable allegorical picture of the then condition and proſpects of the Church. Nay, even Biſhop Berthold is related to have "heard him preach often and gladly with great "admiration" at this time; no doubt rejoicing in ſo brilliant an exception to the general diſgraceful conduct of his clergy, which cauſed him ſo much uneaſineſs; but the Biſhop's favour was not deſtined to endure long, for political events ſoon occurred which produced an entire alteration in his views.

After the death of Benedict XII., Clement VI., the moſt inveterate opponent of Louis IV., was elected Pope, and he had hardly aſcended the throne when he renewed hoſtilities againſt the Emperor with greater vehemence than his predeceſſor. The moſt awful anathemas were launched againſt Louis, which again proved themſelves by no means inefficient weapons of attack. Many eccleſiaſtics, ſecular no leſs than regular, who had been performing divine ſervice in the cities that acknowledged the authority of the Emperor, now turned to their biſhops, humbly beſeeching them for abſolution for their diſobedience, which petition was not rejected; for in many places they obtained it without difficulty on payment of one florin! Biſhop Berthold, too, whoſe outward reconciliation with Louis had been merely dictated by motives of fear and ſelf-intereſt, now beſought pardon for it from the new Pope in an epiſtle dated November 9th, 1345, in which he further renounces his allegiance to the Emperor, and promiſes unconditional obedience to the Romiſh See for the

future. Clement granted his petition, and releaſed him and his dioceſe from eccleſiaſtical penalties. Shortly after (1347), Louis died, fairly worn out and broken-hearted with the long ſtruggle in which his reign had been paſſed, but not until ſeveral of the Electors, under the inſtigation of the Pope, had elected Charles IV. King of Rome (1346). Many of the Eſtates refuſed, however, even after Louis' death, to acknowledge the latter, commonly called the "Parſon-King," becauſe he had been elected in defiance of their wiſhes. Straſburg was one of theſe cities, and in conſequence was again laid under interdict.

To theſe political and eccleſiaſtical diſturbances were added ſtill worſe miſeries. The land was deſolated ſucceſſively by tempeſts, earthquakes, and famine, and at laſt, in 1348, the Black Death came to fill up the meaſure of the people's woe. This plague continued to rage through Southern Germany and France until the following year, bringing in its train the uſual accompaniments of frantic terror, and the diſſolution of all ſocial bonds. In Straſburg ſixteen thouſand perſons fell victims to it; and it is calculated that in Southern France two-thirds of the population periſhed. All theſe convulſions of the natural and ſocial world ſtruck terror to men's very hearts; bewildered and beſet, they knew not which way to turn. Then appeared the ghaſtly proceſſions of the Flagellants, who traverſed the country half-naked by hundreds and thouſands, walking two and two in white ſhirts often ſtained with blood, and holding ſcourges in

their hands. When they entered a town, they broke out into their wild howling chant,

> " Nun hebet auf eure Hände
> Daſs Gott dies groſſe Sterben wende,
> Nun hebet auf eure Arme
> Daſs ſich Gott über uns erbarme ;"

and gathering round them all who would join, after ſervice in a church, threw themſelves on the ground, confeſſing their ſins aloud, and then ſcourged each other till they were exhauſted. In ſome places the popular fanaticiſm accuſed the Jews of cauſing the plague by poiſoning the wells; and the multitude, in their fury, ſetting fire to the Jews' quarter, burnt thouſands of the wretched creatures in their houſes. Numbers of the lower claſſes hoped for a Meſſiah in the perſon of the great " Prieſt-hater," Frederick II., who, according to an old ſaying now expanded into a diſtinct prophecy, was in the latter days to riſe again from the dead, to render juſtice to the widow and orphan, to puniſh and humble the Clergy, to conſtrain monks and nuns to marry, and then to ſail over to the Holy Land and lay down his crown on the Mount of Olives.* This was not the only, though it was the wildeſt prophecy current at this time. Hermann von Fritzlar declares that the time is come that precedes the end of the world:† " This time in which we are now living, is that

* See Wackernagel's *Beitraege zur Vaterlaendiſchen Geſchichte.* Baſle. B. ii. S. 122.
† In the Preface to his *Heiligen-Leben.*

"in which the people's hearts have waxed cold, for they have "forgotten the life of our Lord. Wherefore do arſon, and rape, "and robbery, and treaſon, and ſtrife, and envy, and hatred, rage "now as they never did before; as Chriſt Himſelf foretold, that "in theſe times the love of many ſhould wax cold. The third, "and coming age, is that of Anti-Chriſt." And Tauler too, in his Sermon on Chriſt's ſtilling the Storm, warns his flock: "O "that ye knew what anguiſh and terror ſhall ſhortly ſeize the "hearts of all who have not cleaved to God with all their might, ". . . and all the evil that ſhall overtake them, as has been of "late revealed to the Friends of God." In another ſermon, preached before the coming of the Black Death, he thus recapitulates the judgments of God that were threatened if the people refuſed to repent: "horrible things have been foretold, of fire, "of water, of great darkneſs, of hurricanes and drought." In the midſt of theſe calamities he declaims againſt the perverted leſſons drawn from them by the people; the reckleſſneſs and deſpair of ſome, the craving of others after marvellous viſions and ſupernatural revelations, finally the ſinfulneſs of thoſe who, ſeeking only to eſcape from the world's evils, gave themſelves up to the paſſive indulgence of their own emotion. The laſt error was that againſt which he inveighed moſt frequently, being the one, no doubt, of which his hearers were moſt in danger. He himſelf was not one of thoſe paſſive myſtics. "Works of love," he ſays, "are more acceptable to God than "lofty contemplation; art thou engaged in devouteſt prayer,

" and God wills that thou go out and preach, or carry broth to a " ſick brother, thou ſhouldſt do it with joy."

His own life was conſiſtent with his teachings. When the Black Death came to Straſburg, he devoted himſelf to adminiſtering the ſacraments and carrying conſolation to the ſick and dying. The renewal of the ban had increaſed the general terror and diſtreſs, and at the ſame time opened a ſtill larger field for Tauler's activity. A proclamation had been iſſued exhorting the people not to give way to terror, as it would increaſe their danger of infection; but what could a proclamation avail, when they often ſaw more than fifty corpſes carried through the ſtreets in a day, and there were not prieſts enough to perform the funeral rites? The deeper was their gratitude to Tauler for his noble act of diſobedience to the Church that denied them their only remaining conſolation. But he did not ſtand alone; there were eſpecially two monks who ſhared his labours, Thomas of Straſburg, an Auguſtinian and the Prior-general of his Order in Straſburg, and Ludolph of Saxony, Prior of the newly eſtabliſhed convent of the Carthuſians.* The three friends were not content with ſetting an example of heroic zeal, they iſſued in their joint names an Addreſs to

* Both theſe were alſo writers of ſome note. The former was the author of ſome dry but learned commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. The latter, who had been a profeſſor in Paris, wrote a *Vita Chriſti*, which was much celebrated in the Middle Ages, and an *Expoſitio in Pſalterium*.

the clerical body at large, ſhowing how iniquitous it was that the poor ignorant people ſhould be ſuffered to die excommunicate for no fault of their own, and calling on the prieſts to viſit the ſick and dying, and no longer to refuſe them the conſolations of religion, foraſmuch as Chriſt had died for *all* men, and the Pope had no power to cloſe heaven againſt an innocent perſon who ſhould die under the Interdict. In a ſecond Letter they went further; ſetting forth the doctrine of two Swords and two Powers, the temporal and the ſpiritual, and teaching that the two are not to be confounded, though they ought not to be ſet in oppoſition to each other; that it is indeed the duty of the ſpiritual arm to endeavour to direct the ſecular in the right courſe, but that if a great one has made himſelf liable to the Interdict, that does not give the ſpiritual arm any authority to curſe and excommunicate poor people who, perhaps, do not even know their guilty lord, ſtill leſs whole cities and countries without diſtinction; that it cannot be proved from Holy Scripture, that a King, choſen in a legal manner by the Electors, is to be called a heretic if he reſiſt the power of the Church; and that in any caſe, it is the Emperor alone who muſt give an account to God for his acts of inſubordination, and not his poor ſubjects. Therefore such an unjuſt curſe as this Interdict ſhall be turned into a bleſſing on the heads which it ſtrikes; and, for their oppreſſion, God ſhall exalt them on high. Finally, they proclaimed the principle, that he who profeſſes the true articles of the Chriſtian faith, and

only ſins againſt the power of the Pope, is by no means to be counted a heretic.*

What impreſſion theſe free-ſpoken writings made upon the

* The following extract on this ſubject is given in Profeſſor Schmidt's *Tauler* (p. 53), from Specklin's *Collectanea*:—

"Specially were thoſe two Articles, which were quoted, forbidden and declared to be "wholly heretical. The Firſt was, that ſeeing that many perſons, young and old, rich and poor, "men and women, innocent and wicked, when they came to their death-beds, lay under the ban "on account of the Emperor Louis, they had put forth a Letter to all prieſts, bidding them, when "they ſhould viſit the ſick and dying, to comfort the ſick with the bitter paſſion and death of "Jeſus Chriſt, who had therewith made ſatisfaction before God, not for their ſins only, but for "the ſins of the whole world, and had opened heaven, and reconciled us all to God. And the "Pope had no power to ſhut heaven againſt poor ſinners who had innocently fallen under the "ban. Therefore, when one ſhould confeſs his ſins and deſire abſolution and the holy ſacra-"ment, they ought to give it unto him and comfort him, for heed ſhould be given rather to the "Word of Chriſt and His Apoſtles than to the ban, which proceeded of envy and luſt of worldly "power. The Second was, that they put forth a general epiſtle (not among the com-"mon people, but among the clergy and the learned fathers), ſaying that there be two ſwords, "the ſpiritual ſword, which is the Word of God, and the other, which is the ſecular govern-"ment, and the one had nought to do with the other. But ſince they are both of God, they "cannot be contrary the one to the other; but the ſpiritual ſhall be diligent in its office and in the "Word of God, and defend the Government; and the Government ſhall defend God's laws and "the pious, and puniſh the wicked. But ſince the pious who preach the Word of God ought, "by God's ordinance, to be defended by the ſecular power againſt the wicked, wherefore, then, "ſhould the Government be condemned by the ſpiritual power? for then ſhould God condemn "His own work. But when a ſecular Head ſins, it behoves the ſpiritual Head, with great hu-"mility, to point out unto the ſinner the right way, and with the reſt of the clergy to entreat "God day and night with tears, that the ſinner may turn again from his way, and come to a "true knowledge of his ſins; for God deſireth not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould "turn from his wickedneſs and live.

"But Chriſt, and the Apoſtles, and the Church command that, if the ſinner, after much "admonition, will not be turned from his ways, he be excommunicated till ſuch time as he

clergy is not known: it is only recorded that, through the exertions of Tauler and his friends, the people were enabled to die in

"shall be converted and turn again and amend his life; and then he shall be again received unto "grace.

"Much less doth it behove a Christian shepherd, if one be deserving of excommunication, to "condemn and excommunicate without distinction innocent persons, who perchance have never "known or seen the guilty man,—nay, whole lands, cities, and villages; the which is not com- "manded by Christ, nor the Holy Apostles, nor the Councils, but cometh of a self-usurped "power. For it is the office of the Pope to point sinners unto the true way of salvation.

"But that all those are heretics who will not kiss the Pope's foot, or that to do so should be "an article of faith, and that he is an apostate from the Church who takes the name and fulfils "the office of King or Emperor, on being duly appointed thereto by the Electors, or that all "who render obedience to him, as to their ruler ordained by God, sin against the Church and "are heretics, cannot be proved by Holy Scripture.

"The Government is a power ordained of God, unto which obedience ought to be rendered "in worldly things, even by spiritual persons, be they who they may. The Emperor is the "highest magistrate, wherefore obedience is due to him; if he doth not govern rightly, he, and "not his poor subjects, must give account thereof to God; and even as God will not call the "poor innocent subject to account for his evil ruler, so ought not man to condemn and excom- "municate the poor innocent subject for the sake of his ruler. Moreover, they who hold the "true Christian faith, and sin only against the Pope's person, are no heretics; but he were a "heretic who, after much admonition, should stiffneckedly disobey the Word of God, and would "not amend his life; for not even a murderer, a rogue, a thief, or an adulterer, who should ask "pardon through Christ with true penitence and contrition, and amend his life, can be cast out "of the Church.

"Hence it is concluded, that all those who unjustly and innocently have come under the Ban, "are free before God, and their curse will be turned into a blessing, and their ban and yoke of "oppression will God lift off; even as Christ did not set Himself against the secular power when "He said, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' even as He was obedient to the Government, "though he was the Son of God, commanding men to render to God the things that be God's, "and to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's. Now our souls belong to God; our bodies and "goods unto Cæsar. All this was much better set forth in more words."

peace, and no longer feared the ban, whereas before many thouſands had died without ſhrift, in the agonies of deſpair; whence we muſt conclude that ſome of the other prieſts were brought to ſee the truth of the principles enunciated by the three monks. But it was not likely that ſuch doctrine would long be ſuffered to work unchecked in the public mind. The Pope ſoon interfered, and commanded the Biſhop of Straſburg to burn the books of the three friends, and forbid their peruſal, whether by prieſts or laymen, on pain of excommunication. Berthold, anxious to prove his devotion to the Pope, without delay proceeded to take ſtringent meaſures againſt Tauler and the two high dignitaries who had done ſuch good ſervice in his dioceſe; their writings were everywhere ſearched for and deſtroyed, and they themſelves were expelled from the city. It is not to be wondered at, that Henry of Nordlingen ſhould write word that his "Brother Tauler is now conſtantly in great ſorrow," when he was thus driven from the field of faithful labours at the very moment of their greateſt neceſſity. But he did not loſe courage; with his two friends he retired into the neighbouring Carthuſian convent, of which Ludolph was Prior, whence they continued to diffuſe their writings.

During the time of their ſecluſion, Straſburg was viſited by the Emperor Charles IV., who was making the circuit of the Rheniſh cities, to induce the citizens to acknowledge him as King of Rome. Biſhop Berthold had already conjured the members of the Rheniſh Eſtates aſſembled at Straſburg, for the ſake of the public peace,

to do allegiance to the Emperor whom they deſpiſed. Charles was therefore received with royal honours, and inveſted the Biſhop with the imperial fief, after receiving his ſolemn homage; but he was obliged to promiſe the citizens that he would procure the removal of the Interdict, for only on this condition would they acknowledge him. From Straſburg Charles proceeded to Baſle, where he met the Pope's Envoy bringing a commiſſion to the Biſhop of Bamberg to abſolve the cities that ſhould acknowledge the Emperor. But the terms of the Bull to this effect, in which Louis was called a heretic, and the cities were required to expreſs their contrition for their fidelity to him, irritated the burghers to the higheſt degree, and they refuſed to ſwear to the formula of abſolution when it was read to them. Nevertheleſs, as the Emperor ſtood in need of their ſervices, the Interdict was removed. The Biſhop of Bamberg next repaired, in his quality of Papal Legate, to Straſburg, to proclaim the Abſolution there. The citizens were aſſembled before the Cathedral, then riſing in its new glories. From the ſteps of the weſtern door the Legate read the Bull in their ears, and then aſked the Senate and commoners if they deſired abſolution? Peter Schwarber, the Mayor, replied, "Yes," in the name of all; and the Biſhop immediately pronounced the Abſolution. On this the Biſhop Berthold, turning to the Mayor, ſaid, "Maſter Schwarber, once you helped to force "us to pay homage to the heretic Louis; and now that he is dead "you yourſelf hold him to be a heretic." But the Mayor replied, "My Lord Biſhop, I have never accounted the Emperor

"Louis a heretic." "How!" exclaimed Berthold, "have you "not juſt declared him ſuch?" "No," ſaid Schwarber: "the "Biſhop of Bamberg aſked if we deſired abſolution? and to this I "ſaid, 'Yes,' in the name of all. Had he aſked whether we believed "and would obſerve all the articles he read to us, we ſhould have "given him a very different anſwer."

During the viſit of the Emperor to Straſburg he heard much talk of Tauler and his friends, and their free opinions, and ſent for them to hear their defence. They read before him their confeſſion of faith, and unſhrinkingly declared their adherence to all that they had hitherto taught. Tauler, eſpecially, was not a man to quail before a temporal ſovereign after he had braved the more formidable terrors of the ſpiritual power; moreover, we find that he did not ſcruple occaſionally in his ſermons to rebuke the oppreſſion of the people by their rulers*; and he openly told the Emperor wherefore he was baniſhed. The arguments of the three monks produced ſuch an impreſſion upon Charles, that he is ſaid to have declared himſelf "ſheer of their opinion," and expreſſed his deſire that no further proceedings ſhould be taken againſt them. Nevertheleſs the Biſhops preſent condemned, as

* Thus, he ſays in his Sermon on the Twenty-firſt Sunday after Trinity:—"Now the "Apoſtle tells us to contend againſt princes and powers, and the rulers of the darkneſs of this "world. This means the devils; but it means alſo the princes of this world, who ought to be "the beſt of all, and are nevertheleſs the very horſes on which the devils ride to ſow diſcord "and treaſon, and who torment their ſubjects by their pride and unjuſt tyranny and manifold op-"preſſions, as we now ſee throughout the world."

heretical, the doctrines we have already mentioned as contained in their writings, commanded them no longer ſo wickedly to withſtand the Church and her Interdict, enjoined them to iſſue a public recantation, and for the future to write nothing more of the like nature on pain of excommunication. Specklin declares that they went on and wrote ſtill better than before; but nothing more is known of the matter beyond this meagre ſtatement of his.

From this time forward, Tauler diſappears from the hiſtory of his native city, until a ſhort time before his death. It is ſaid that, ſince the Emperor and Biſhops forbade him to write, he forſook Straſburg, after having ſpread much good doctrine abroad in Alſace. His name was held in grateful remembrance, not only by the "Friends of God," but by all his fellow-citizens, for whom he had faithfully laboured and ſuffered during the whole period of their troubles; but he needed a ſphere of greater freedom, and therefore took up his reſidence in Cologne, a city already familiar to him, and where he found numerous brethren in ſpirit. Here he commonly preached in the church of St. Gertrude, belonging to a convent of Dominican nuns, whoſe numbers were much increaſed by the deſire of having Tauler for a preacher and confeſſor. Among theſe ſiſters, however, their original ſtrictneſs of manners no longer prevailed, and Tauler often found occaſion in his ſermons to lament the decay of conventual diſcipline. The younger ſiſters too often brought with them from the world their love of ſociety and amuſements, and were ſtrengthened in theſe

taſtes by their intercourſe with the older nuns; for moſt of them thought more of dreſs and trinkets than of devout exerciſes and ſelf-denial, ſo that Tauler tells them that all their piety is a mere outward ſemblance, and that many laywomen are much farther advanced in holineſs than they. Tauler not only diſplayed his cuſtomary zeal in reſtoring a ſeverer diſcipline, but endeavoured to ſubſtitute for theſe mere outward works of piety, the ſpiritual, which he regarded as the only true ſervice of God. He ſought alſo, while in Cologne, to combat the pantheiſtic enthuſiaſm of the Beghards, who had been extremely numerous in this city ever ſince the commencement of the century, and, notwithſtanding, or perhaps rather favoured by, frequent perſecutions, in which many of their members were burnt at the ſtake, were continuing to make progreſs during this age of anarchy.* In the year 1357

* I give the following paſſage from his Sermon on the Firſt Sunday in Lent [No. 31, Frankfort Edition, 1826], as ſhowing, more diſtinctly than any other I have found, the poſition in which he ſtood towards the antinomian doctrines of the Beghards, and as furniſhing the moſt complete refutation of the charge of antinomian tendencies ſometimes brought againſt his own preaching:—

"From theſe two errors proceedeth the third, which is the worſt of all; the perſons who "are entangled therein call themſelves beholders of God, and they may be known by the carnal "peace which they have through their emptineſs. They think that they are free from ſin, "and are united to God without any means whatſoever, and that they have got above all "ſubjection to the Holy Church, and above the commandments of God, and above all works "of virtue; for they think this emptineſs to be ſo noble a thing that it may not be hindered "by aught elſe, whatſoever it be. Hence they ſtand empty of all ſubjection, and do no works "either towards them who are above or below them, even as an inſtrument is empty, and "waiteth on the maſter when he ſhall chooſe to work therewith; for they deem that if

(therefore during Tauler's reſidence in Cologne), the Archbiſhop, William of Gennep, inſtituted a freſh ſearch after them, and commanded the clergy of his dioceſe ſtrictly to enforce the ſtatutes of his predeceſſors againſt them. Tauler, however, though a Dominican, never took part in any act of perſecution; the profound ſpiritual ſtruggles through which he had had to

" they work, it hindereth the work of God, and therefore they empty themſelves of all virtue. " Nay, they would be ſo empty, that they would not give praiſe or thanks to God, nor have, " nor confeſs, nor love, nor deſire, nor pray for anything; for they have already, as they " ſuppoſe, all that they could pray for; and think that they are poor in ſpirit, for that they " are, as they dream, without all ſelf-will, and have renounced all ownerſhip wholly and " without reſerve. For they believe that they have riſen above it, and that they poſſeſs all " thoſe things for the ſake of which the ordinances and precepts of the Church were " appointed and eſtabliſhed, and that none can give or take from them, not even God " Himſelf, ſince they think that they have ſuffered all exerciſes and all virtues, and have " attained to pure emptineſs of ſpirit; and they ſay it requireth more pains to become empty " of virtue than to attain unto virtue. For the ſake of this emptineſs of ſpirit, they deſire " to be free, and obedient to none, neither the Pope, nor the Biſhop, nor the Paſtor; and though " they may ſeem outwardly to be ſo at times, yet are they inwardly obedient to none, neither in " will nor deed. For they would fain be free from all thoſe things wherewith the Holy Church " is concerned; and they ſay openly that a man, ſo long as he ſtrives after virtue, is ſtill imperfect, " and knows nought of ſpiritual poverty and ſpiritual freedom. And they deem themſelves " exalted above the angels, and above all human merit and faith, ſo that they can neither increaſe " in virtue nor commit ſin; for they live, as they ſuppoſe, without will, and poſſeſs their ſpirits " in peace and emptineſs, and have become nought in themſelves and one with God. They " believe that they may do freely, without ſin, whatſoever nature deſireth, becauſe they have " attained to the higheſt innocence, and there is no law or commandment for them, and there- " fore they follow all the luſts of the fleſh, that the emptineſs of the ſpirit may remain unhindered. " They care not for faſts, nor feaſts, nor precepts, except ſo far as they may obſerve them for " the ſake of others, becauſe they live without conſcience in all things. Let each man examine

paſs, had taught him how deep the roots of belief lay beneath thoſe regions of the ſoul that can be reached by outward weapons; and when he ſpeaks of the "Free Spirits," it is to ſhow the error of their doctrines, not to demand their extirpation. Indeed, his writings, and thoſe of his diſciple Rulman Merſwin, exhibit in this reſpect a Chriſtian largeneſs of heart in great contraſt to the

"himſelf whether he be not one of theſe. But a murderer, or any open ſinner, is better than "ſuch ſpiritual men, for he confeſſes his miſdeed that it is evil; but theſe confeſs it not. Hardly "are they to be converted; and at times they are verily poſſeſſed by the Devil. They are, "moreover, ſo ingenious that it is ſcarcely poſſible to overcome them in diſcourſe, ſave by the "life of Chriſt and Holy Scripture: through theſe may one well diſcern that they are "deceived.

"Now cometh the fourth error. Many be alſo called beholders of God, who are yet different "in ſome points from what we have juſt ſaid. Theſe alſo think that they are empty of all "works, and are tools of God by whom God works whatſoever He will, and they merely ſuffer "Him, without working themſelves; and they ſay that the works wrought of God through them "are more noble and of greater merit than thoſe of a man who worketh his own works in the "grace of God; and declare that they are God-ſuffering men, for they do but ſuffer the works "that God worketh in them. But although they are empty of the works, and do nought, yet "will they not be empty of and miſs the reward; and whatever they do is no ſin, for God "worketh their works, as they ſay, and whatſoever He wills is wrought in them, and nought "elſe, and, as we ſaid, inwardly they are wholly paſſive, and live without care for anything; "and they have a humble, ſubmiſſive manner, and can bear well whatſoever befals them, for "they think themſelves to be an inſtrument through which God worketh as He will. Theſe "people are, in many points, like unto the true men; but in this are they falſe, that they hold "everything whereunto they are inwardly impelled, whether good or bad, to proceed from "the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit worketh never unprofitable things in a man, ſuch as "be not contrary to the life of Chriſt or Holy Scripture, and therefore are they deceived. "Theſe men are very hard to diſcover, for they can give good reaſons for, and put a fair face "on all they do; but they may be known by their ſtubborn ſelf-will, that they would rather

prevailing ſpirit of his Order. They more than once maintain the ſalvation of thoſe who are in error from ignorance, and declare that their deſire to believe what is true is accepted by God in place of a correct belief, and that thus many heathen and Jews are ſaved now as well as before the coming of Chriſt. Rulman Merſwin aſcribes the terrible perſecution of the Jews, then raging, to the covetouſneſs of the Chriſtians.*

" die than give up one tittle of their own way. Theſe are contrary to them who ſay that they " cannot increaſe in virtue; but they deſerve the ſame meaſure. Behold all ſuch errors are meſ- " ſengers of Antichriſt, preparing the way before him unto unbelief and damnation.

" Now it concerns us ſomewhat to know how we may eſcape theſe cunning ſnares. No man " may be free from keeping the commandments of God, and from the practice of virtue. No " man can unite himſelf to God in emptineſs of ſpirit, without loving and longing after God. " No man can be or become holy without good works. No man can reſt in God without the " love of God. No man may empty himself of godly works that he may not hinder God in " His works, but muſt work with Him in thankfulneſs. No man may ſerve God without " praiſing and thanking Him; for He is the Maker of all creatures, and He alone can give " and take, for of His riches and might there is no end. And a man may increaſe in virtue " and goodneſs, and may exerciſe himſelf therein as long as he lives; and no man deſerveth " more reward, though he think that he merely ſuffer the works of God to be wrought in him. " The works of God are eternal and unchangeable; for He worketh according to His own " nature, and not otherwiſe; and in theſe works of God there can be no merit and adding " thereunto of any creature, for there is none but God who cannot become more or higher; " but through the power of God the creatures have their own work to perform, in nature, " and in grace, and in glory."

* The following curious paſſage is extracted from Rulman Merſwin's *Book of the Nine Rocks;* but many paſſages in Tauler's ſermons ſhow that his ſentiments were quite in harmony with thoſe here expreſſed:—

" The Man ſaid: 'Ah, my Beloved, have mercy upon poor Chriſtendom, and remember " how that the wicked Jewiſh people and the wicked heathen folk are all ſtriving againſt thee

Tauler continued to correſpond with Nicolas of Baſle. In the year 1356 the latter ſent him a pamphlet, in which, on the ſtrength of a warning viſion, he bewails the ſinfulneſs of the

" with all their might, and ſhall all be loſt.' The ANSWER ſaid: 'I tell thee thou art " right when thou prayeſt God to have mercy upon poor Chriſtendom; for know that for " many hundred years Chriſtendom has never been ſo poor or ſo wicked as in theſe times; " but I tell thee, whereas thou ſayeſt that the wicked Jews and heathen are all loſt, that is " not true: I tell thee, in theſe days, there is a portion of the heathen and the Jews whom " God preferreth greatly to many who bear the Chriſtian name, and yet live contrary to all " Chriſtian order.' The MAN: '. . . What ſtrange ſpeech is this that I hear, and what " may it mean?' The ANSWER: '. . . The meaning is, that where a Jew or heathen, " in any part of the world, hath a good, God-fearing mind in him, in ſimplicity and honeſty, " and in his reaſon and judgment knoweth no better faith than that in which he was born, " but were minded and willing to caſt that off, if he were given to know any other faith that " were more acceptable to God, and would obey God, if he ventured body and goods there- " for;—I tell thee, where there is a Jew or heathen thus earneſt in his life – ſay, ought he " not to be much dearer to God than the evil, falſe Chriſtian men who have received " baptiſm, and act contrary to God, knowing that they do ſo?' . . . The MAN: . . . 'This " ſeemeth to me moſt ſtrange, . . . for it is written in the Scripture, and is alſo a part of " our Chriſtian creed, that no one can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven unleſs he firſt " receive holy baptiſm.' The ANSWER: 'That is true, and the right Chriſtian faith. . . . " When God findeth ſuch a righteous heathen or Jew, what doth He do? Of His free love " and fathomleſs mercy, He cometh to his help: I tell thee God findeth many ſecret ways " that ſuch a man be not loſt, wherever he may be in this wide world.' . . . The MAN: " 'Say! how are theſe unbaptized men ſaved from perdition?' The ANSWER: 'God " doth it by many ſecret ways, which are unknown to moſt Chriſtians in theſe days. . . . " One way, which Chriſtendom may well believe and does believe, is, that when one of " theſe good heathens or Jews cometh to his end, God cometh and enlighteneth him with the " Chriſtian faith; . . . and if he may not be baptized, God baptizes him in his good " deſires and will, and in his miſerable death. Thou ſhalt know that there be many of theſe " good heathens and Jews in eternal life, who have entered thereon in this wiſe.' . . ."

times, and foretels the coming of freſh calamities, of which the great earthquake that deſtroyed Baſle in the ſame year was regarded as the commencement. No details of Tauler's work in Cologne have been preſerved to us. It is not even known whether the compoſition of his chief work, the "Imitation of "Chriſt's Life of Poverty," is to be referred to this period or to that of his ſecluſion in the Carthuſian Convent at Straſburg. In this work he ſets forth the theory and practice of ſelf-renunciation in order to union with God. In point of language and compoſition, it is ſuperior to his Sermons, nearly all of which ſeem to be derived from mere notes taken by his hearers with more or leſs correctneſs.* It is intereſting to compare his view of poverty

* It has been often queſtioned whether the Latin or the German form in which we poſſeſs Tauler's ſermons be the original. On this point I tranſcribe Profeſſor Schmidt's arguments, which ſeem to me quite concluſive:—

"There can be no queſtion that Tauler delivered his ſermons in German, and that this lan-
"guage is the original one of all the ſermons of his which we ſtill poſſeſs. After his connection
"with Nicolas of Baſle, he had himſelf declared that he did not intend henceforward to ſpeak ſo
"much Latin in his ſermons. The greater part of thoſe ſtill extant are, indeed, addreſſed in the
"firſt inſtance to the brethren or ſiſters in whoſe convent-chapels he uſed to preach, but alſo
"have a reference to the laity, who uſually aſſembled in great numbers in theſe churches to hear
"him; and to be intelligible to ſuch an audience he muſt have ſpoken in the vernacular: it was
"only in the School attached to his own convent that he ſpoke in Latin. The language itſelf of
"Tauler's ſermons and writings is, beſides, a ſufficient proof that they were compoſed in German;
"for they exhibit the moſt complete adaptation of the thought to the form in which it is con-
"veyed; a form, moreover, that Tauler had to a conſiderable extent to create for himſelf. Up
"to his day, the German language had been little uſed for theological and metaphyſical ſubjects,
"and was poor in terms to expreſs any notions beyond thoſe living in the popular mind, ſo that
"the writers of his ſchool (in bringing the higher and more ſpiritual truths of religion down to

with that of the Spiritual Franciſcans, who taught that, to any high attainment in the Chriſtian life, a literal renunciation of all property was abſolutely neceſſary. Tauler, while aſſuming the excellence of this external poverty, as releaſing the Chriſtian from many cares and temptations to anxiety, ſhows that the eſſence of the poverty of Chriſt did not, as they taught, lie in this privation of earthly wealth, but in the poorneſs of the ſpirit that calls nothing its own, becauſe itſelf and all that it has are God's, and held in truſt for Him.

Of Tauler's hiſtory we know no more till we find him at Straſburg, in 1361, already labouring under the illneſs which cloſed his life. There are no indications of the date or the reaſon of his return to his old home. We are only told that, after a long life of toilſome yet fruitful labour, he was attacked, at ſeventy years of age, by a lingering diſeaſe, attended with great ſuffering. During his

" the level of popular apprehenſion) had to frame for themſelves a terminology of their own, " whoſe conſtituents they borrowed partly from the Latin of the Schools, partly from figurative, " moſtly biblical, forms of ſpeech. Tauler often avails himſelf of ſuch German ſcholaſtic terms " to expreſs abſtract notions: as, for inſtance, *Iſtekeit* (eſſentia), *Eigenſhaftlicheit*, *Creaturlicheit*, " *Unserheit*, *Sinſheit*, *Holtzheit*. So, too, he often ſpeaks by images, in order to expreſs ſpi- " ritual facts or metaphyſical ideas, for which the language either poſſeſſed no words as yet, or " which in themſelves were too vague to be expreſſed in a clear and diſtinct mode. All this " indicates a laborious wreſtling of the thought with the language. Hence, alſo, " the partial obſcurity of Tauler's ſtyle, which is incurred by the pains he took to attain a terſe " purity by forming ſubſtantives made up of whole propoſitions: as, for inſtance, '*ein einvaltiges* " '*grüntlich-uf-got-ſich-loſſen*.' Tauler and his ſchool have, however, the merit " of having given to their nation a philoſophical language." (See Schmidt's *Tauler*, S. 78.)

illneſs he cauſed himſelf to be removed to the convent where his aged ſiſter was a nun, that ſhe might be with him and tend him to the laſt,—an act which is enumerated as one of his faults, by one of the writers of his ſchool, who calls it ſeeking for too much natural help and comfort.

After twenty weeks of pain, he ſent for his myſterious friend, and begged him to viſit him once more, for he perceived that his end was nigh. The man was obedient, and came to the Maſter, who received him full lovingly; and the man was glad that he found him yet alive, and ſaid, "Dear Maſter, how "fares it with thee?" Then ſaid the Maſter, "Dear ſon, I "believe the time is near when God is minded to take me "from this world; therefore, dear ſon, it is a great comfort "to me that thou ſhouldſt be here at my departure." On this, Tauler gave him ſome papers, in which he had written down the diſcourſe which they had had together twenty years before, and begged Nicolas to make a little book of it, which the latter promiſed him to do. But Tauler earneſtly enjoined him to conceal both their names; "for," he ſays, "thou muſt ſurely "know that the life and words and works which God hath "wrought through me, a poor unworthy ſinner, are not mine, "but wrought by the power of the Almighty God, to whom "they eternally belong. Therefore, dear ſon, if thou art minded "to write them for the benefit of our fellow-Chriſtians, do it in "ſuch a manner that neither my name nor thine be mentioned "therein. Thou mayſt ſay, 'The Maſter and the Man.' Neither

"ſhalt thou let any one in this city ſee the book, elſe people will "mark that it was I; but take it with thee into thine own "country, ſo that it do not come out during my life." For yet eleven days, it is ſaid that they held much diſcourſe together; and then, under circumſtances of extraordinary ſuffering, the faithful ſervant yielded up his ſpirit to God, on the 16th of June, 1361. He was buried in his own convent. The ſtone which formerly covered his grave has been recently ſet up by the Proteſtants in the church in which he warned and conſoled his brethren more than five hundred years ago by word of mouth, as he teaches us, who are now living, by the written record of thoſe words.

Here ends our proper taſk; but it can hardly, I think, be without intereſt to the reader to learn a few more particulars about the remarkable ſet of men to which Tauler belonged, eſpecially concerning the great Layman who had ſo powerful an influence on his career, and the diſciple and boſom friend of both ſucceſſively, Rulman Merſwin, who appears to ſtand third in rank in this group of "Friends of God." From the account of him given in the "*Memorial*" of the Gruenen-Worth Convent, it appears that he was originally a wealthy merchant and money-changer, "but always conducted his buſineſs with great fear "of God before his eyes, and with ſcrupulous probity, and ſtood "well with the world, and was of a very merry and pleaſant tem-"per, ſo that many eſteemed and loved him, and ſought his ſociety, "which was to himſelf alſo very agreeable in thoſe days. And he

"had at the firſt an exceeding beautiful and ſweet young wife; but "when they had lived but a ſhort time together, ſhe died; and "after that, he took another wife, the daughter of a pious knight. "And when they had lived many years together according to "Chriſtian ordinances, and he was now forty years old, and God "ſaw not fit to give him a child by either wife, he turned with his "whole heart to God, and gave up his trade, and forſook the "world, and led a ſingle life henceforward, with the will and con- "ſent of his wife, who was an honourable ſimple-minded Chriſtian "woman."

His own account of the next four years of his life, now printed for the firſt time from the MS. in his own handwriting, is a very curious and intereſting document, in the vivid picture it gives of the inward ſtruggles which this determination brought upon him; and however clearly we may perceive that many of his difficulties aroſe from the miſtaken view of his ſocial duties derived from the teachings of his church, it is impoſſible not to admire the ſimple directneſs of purpoſe and intenſe earneſtneſs with which he ſtrove to follow every indication he could perceive of the will of God. I give a few paſſages from it, taking the liberty to omit the perpetual repetitions, which would render an abſolutely literal tranſlation quite unreadable. Indeed, Rulman's ſtyle, both in this and his other productions, has all the awkwardneſs, circumlocution, and tautology, which uſually characterize the efforts of an utterly unlearned perſon to expreſs himſelf.

"In the name of God, Amen! All ye dear Chriſtian men, I

"give you truly to know that in the year of our Lord, 1347, it "came to paſs that I, Rulman Merſwin, renounced all my traffic "and gains, and moreover all natural pleaſant companionſhip; "the which I did with good courage for God's ſake, to the ſole "end that I might atone for my ſins. Now, though I had taken "this firſt ſtep with good courage, and of my own free choice "had given myſelf to God, yet it was with great ſorrow to my "nature afterwards; for I had enjoyed great happineſs in the good "things of this world." After deſcribing the dreadful anguiſh of mind he had to endure on account of his ſins, and the ſpiritual joys with which it alternated, he continues: "And I came utterly "to hate the world and all belonging to it, and alſo my own "fleſh, wherefore during this firſt year I chaſtiſed my body with "very ſore and manifold exerciſes, ſo that I more than once "became ſo weak, that I thought I ſhould die. But about this "time I took Tauler for my confeſſor, who diſcovered ſomewhat "of theſe exerciſes, for he perceived that I had become very "ſickly; and he feared for my head, and commanded me to "exerciſe myſelf no more in ſuch wiſe, and ſet me a certain time; "and I muſt needs obey him, but my obedience went very much "againſt the grain, for I had ſet my heart upon bringing my "body into ſubjection. But as ſoon as the term was out, I ſaid "nothing, but began again to do as I had done before . . . But "our Lord was pleaſed, during this firſt year, to give me a true "diſcernment in many things, ſo that whenever I commended "any matter with great earneſtneſs to God, He gave me to per-

"ceive what I muſt do and leave undone. Moreover, our Lord "alſo ſuffered me to be ofttimes tormented with grievous and "horrible temptations, both by day and night; but it was given "to me, by the grace of God, to receive them with humble and "cheerful ſubmiſſion, ſo that I could ſay with heart and mouth, "'My Lord and my God, my nature hates and loathes this "ſuffering; wherefore I pray thee to take no account thereof, and "do not as my poor nature would deſire and entreat of thee, but "fulfil thy moſt bleſſed will, whether it be ſweet or bitter to my "weak nature.' . . . And when God ſaw that it was the proper "time, He came to my help with his merciful grace . . . Now, "during the ſecond and the third years (this laſt was the jubilee, "when all men went on pilgrimage to Rome,) did God work "many great and ſupernatural works with me, a poor ſinner, "through great ſorrow and ſpiritual aſſaults, and withal unſpeak-"able temptations, of which it were a ſin to write. But one which "I may write is, that God ſuffered me to be aſſailed with unbelief: "to wit, that the devil put it into my head to aſk: 'How may "it be, that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit may "conſiſt in one nature?' And this unbelief remained upon me "for a long ſpace, and all that time I thought nothing elſe but "that I muſt certainly burn for ever in hell; and yet I felt within "myſelf that nevertheleſs my will was ſet to love God. And "after a good while, I grew ſo infirm, through this continual "pain, that it was all I could do, when Aſſumption day came, to "venture to go and ſit down to hear a ſermon. And as I put

"my hat before my eyes, I fell into a ſwoon from very weakneſs;
"but while I was thus in a trance, there appeared unto me a
"great ſtone, wherein were carved the likeneſs of three men's
"countenances. . . . And it was as though a voice ſaid to me,
"'Now mayeſt thou well believe, ſince thou haſt ſeen how in one
"ſtone may be three perſons, and yet it is one ſtone, and the
"three perſons have the nature of one rock.' And hereupon I
"came to myſelf, and was ſeized with fear when I found myſelf ſit-
"ting among the crowd . . . So I roſe up and walked out into the
"aiſle, and found that my faith had been enlightened, inſomuch
"that I never again was aſſailed with unbelief; but the other
"terrible temptations I had to endure for two years longer . . .
"inſomuch that I often thought I knew the pains of hell. And
"I was ſo ill that my friends would not ſuffer me to go on pil-
"grimage to Rome; neither could I ſcourge myſelf nor wear a
"hair ſhirt, nor a ſharp crucifix, nor endure any other hardſhip
". . . but feared that I ſhould die, and was ſomewhat troubled
"thereat, for I could not but love my natural life. . . . And in
"all thoſe two years God would not ſuffer me to ſpeak of my
"pain to any man, however great it might be . . . I muſt bear
"and endure to the end alone, that I might have no help or
"conſolation. . . . But in the fourth year, my Lord and God
"ſhowed his great mercy upon me, and looked upon my affliction,
"and came to my help with ſuch great and ſuperhuman joy, that
"in that moment I forgot all my woe and pain that ever I had
"ſuffered, and became alſo in all my natural powers quite ſtrong

"and lively, as though I had never known what ſickneſs was. ". . . And he gave me, moreover, much gracious diſcernment, "ſo that, when I looked narrowly at a man, I could ofttimes "perceive pretty well how it ſtood with him inwardly. And I "was further conſtrained, however unwilling, to write a little "book for the benefit of my fellow Chriſtians." From a compariſon of dates, it appears that this "little book" muſt be the *Book of the Nine Rocks*, already mentioned. In the opening of this work, Rulman, under the allegorical form of viſions, gives a much more detailed account of the mental conflicts he paſſed through, ariſing partly from reluctance to contemplate the wretchedneſs around him, partly from the dread of being condemned by the church as unauthorised to teach and heretical,—before he could reſolve to write. Finally, ſeeing no eſcape from what appeared to him a poſitive duty, he ſets to work. The firſt part contains a deſcription of the terrible condition of Chriſtendom; all claſſes are paſſed under review, and their particular ſins expoſed,—thoſe of the clergy with eſpecial freedom.* The ſecond part is a deſcription of nine rocks which ſymbolize nine ſtages in the progreſs of the ſoul towards a higher life; each more difficult of

* Thus, in ſpeaking of the Popes, he ſays, "Look around thee, and ſee what ſort of lives "the Popes have led and do lead in theſe our times; we may not name any one in particular. "Look . . . if they have not taken more thought for themſelves and for the maintenance "of their own dignity than for the promotion of God's glory. Look around thee, "and behold the lives of the biſhops in theſe days, whether they are not more buſied in ſcraping "together earthly wealth for the enriching of their relatives than in ſeeing to it that men are

aſcent, and more glorious than the preceding. From the ſummit, he obtains a momentary glimpſe into the abyſs of Deity; then, looking back to earth, ſees two men, the one bright and ſhining as an angel, the other black as Satan. The latter was one who, having reached the ſummit of the nine rocks, had deſired to be ſomewhat for himſelf, and had thereupon fallen ſtep by ſtep back into the abyſs; the former, one who having gazed at the Godhead, filled with love and compaſſion, deſcended voluntarily to ſave his brethren from their ſins.

In his autobiography, Rulman further tells us, among other things: "In this fourth year, the three powers of faith, hope, "and love were greatly ſtrengthened in me. . . . Moreover, "nothing in time or eternity could give me content but God "Himſelf; but when He came to my ſoul, I knew not whether "I were in time or eternity. . . . And in my heart I felt a great "yearning, and wiſhed it were the will of God that I might go "to the heathen and tell them of the Chriſtian faith. . . . And "I would gladly have ſuffered death and martyrdom at their "hands, in honour of our Lord's ſufferings and bitter death. "But of all this I was not ſuffered to ſpeak a word to any, until "there came a time when God gave a man in the Oberland to

"taught to walk in righteous, godly ways. Behold and ſee how many doctors and "teachers are to be found in theſe days, who utter God's word from their chairs, and dare pub- "licly to proclaim the real truth, and publicly to ſpeak of the great and murderous crimes that "prevail in the Chriſtian world, and to warn men; and are willing by ſo doing to riſk their "lives for God's honour."

"understand that he should come down to me. And when he "came, God gave me to tell him of all these things. And this "man was altogether unknown to the world, but he became my "secret friend, and I gave myself up to his guiding in God's "stead, and told him all my hidden life in these four years. . . . "Then he said to me: 'Behold, dear friend, here is a book in "which stand written the first five years of my life in God; "give me the history of thy first four years in exchange for it.' "But I answered: 'It would grieve me much if my history "should come to the knowledge of any.' Then he said: "'Now see, I have given thee my book, and I know full well "that thou wilt tell none of it. No more will I tell any of thee. "I will take thy book up into my own land far away, where "thou art as unknown as I am in Strasburg. And so begin to "write thy history in two books, and the one I will take and "the other thou shalt keep, and shalt hang thy seal thereto, and "lock it up where none shall find it during thy lifetime.' . . .

"Now, notwithstanding all the gifts and enlightenment that "God bestowed on me in this fourth year, there was yet a secret "spot in my soul, the which was altogether unknown to myself. ". . . And it was, that, when I looked upon my fellow-men, I "esteemed them as they were in this present time, and stood "before God in their sins; and this was a hidden spot, for I "ought, through grace, to have regarded them, not as they now "were, but as they might well become. . . ." In seeing a waste piece of ground cumbered with rubbish, and giving it as

his judgment that it might be reclaimed and made a garden of, an inward voice reveals his ſin to him, and rebukes him, ſaying: "O thou poor miſerable creature! how ſtrange art thou "how dareſt thou, then, to eſteem, according to what he now is, "thy fellow-man, who is made in the image of God, and whom "Chriſt has made his brother in his human nature, and not "rather deem that God may make of him a comely and excellent "garden wherein He himſelf may dwell? . . ." The reſt of Rulman's narrative refers to his views of the condition of the Chriſtian world, and he tells us: "It was revealed to me that I ſhould no "longer be ſo greatly exerciſed by the temptations from which I "had hitherto ſuffered . . . but that my affliction henceforth "ſhould be to behold how the ſheep were wandering abroad "among the proud, unclean, ravening wolves . . . this ſhould "be my trial and my croſs. . . ."

Rulman, however, not only ſought "to benefit his fellow-"Chriſtians" by his writings, but alſo by his deeds of active benevolence. His name occurs about this time as one of the managers of a hoſpital; he is mentioned as Provoſt of the convent of St. Argobaſt, and in the 16th century a houſe of Beguines in Straſburg ſtill bears his name; but he is beſt known as the founder of the convent belonging to the Knights of St. John at Straſburg. After long deliberation with Nicolas, whether it would not be better to "devote the money to the help of poor "people, that they might not die of hunger," Rulman, with ſome pecuniary aſſiſtance from Nicolas, bought and repaired the half-

ruined convent of Gruenen-Worth, which he then endowed and made over to the Order of St. John, on condition that its worldly affairs ſhould be managed by three lay truſtees, and that it ſhould be a refuge for any good men, whether prieſts or laymen, rich or poor, who might wiſh to retire there for their ſpiritual benefit, and were willing, during their ſtay, to conform to the cuſtoms of the houſe. His principal motive ſeems indeed to have been the deſire to provide a permanent aſylum for pious perſons like himſelf, whoſe free opinions might at any moment bring them into trouble. He entered on poſſeſſion of it in 1366, and continued to live there till his death in July, 1382, having, however, two years before, built himſelf a ſolitary cell cloſe to the church, becauſe he thought that he took too much earthly delight in the ſociety of his brethren of the convent. He was buried, with his wife, who had alſo retired to a convent, and had died twelve years before, in the choir of the church he built.

It is much to be regretted that the autobiography of Nicolas ſhould not have been preſerved, like that of his diſciple, or at leaſt has not as yet been found. Though, however, we are thus deprived of the ſecret hiſtory of his mind, we are able to learn a good deal reſpecting his work and mode of life from his Story of the Four Men who lived with him, and the recently diſcovered letters. Still theſe notices are very fragmentary, and his hiſtory is mixed up with ſo much of a marvellous and half-legendary character, that in many caſes it is difficult to make out the actual facts. He appears at all events to have been the

leader and centre of a diſtinct aſſociation of "Friends of God." That, even before the date at which he began to collect aſſociates round him, he was regarded as a remarkably holy and enlightened man, is proved by the circumſtance that two of the four men whoſe inward hiſtory he relates, having known him in their youth, came to him for help when they found themſelves in ſpiritual perplexity. At an early period he began to caſt his eye upon thoſe whom he thought he could influence for good. In 1340, when, as he lived till the beginning of the following century, he muſt have been ſtill comparatively a young man, he went on his miſſion to Tauler: about 1350, when the latter had left Straſburg, began his connexion with Rulman Merſwin and probably with Berthold von Rohrbach, who was burnt at Spire, in 1356, for preaching that a layman enlightened by God was as competent to teach others as the moſt learned prieſt. About the ſame time he was in Hungary, and appears alſo to have ſojourned in Italy. The four men already mentioned joined themſelves to him one after the other. The ſecond of them had been an intimate friend of Nicolas from his youth; he was a man of large property, and early married to a beautiful wife, by whom he had two children. After a few years of happineſs, however, he began to ſuffer from the ſcruples by which pious Catholics have been ſo often tormented, and to doubt whether he ought not to renounce his domeſtic joys in order to do penance for his ſins; but Nicolas, to whom he came for counſel, enjoined him to remain true to his duties as a huſband and father; and it was

not until after the death of his wife and both his children that he took up his abode with his friend, and became a prieſt. The two brothers who ſeem to have ſtood next to Nicolas in conſideration, were a learned juriſt, who had been alſo a lay-prebend, and a converted Jew, named John, who both afterwards became prieſts.

The little company lived together on equal terms. Nicolas tells the prieſt, when deliberating whether or not to enter a monaſtic Order, and enquiring as to his brethren's mode of life; "They obſerve no rules but ſuch as are common to ſecular "prieſts, as indeed they are, but we live together in common as "ſimply as we can, and have as little to do with the world as "we may." The prieſts among them ſeem to have had no peculiar vocation, except that of celebrating maſs; the laymen never took part in the adminiſtration of the ſacraments, but in all other reſpects there was no diſtinction between them. As all ſtood in a direct and individual relation to God, they required no prieſtly mediation; nay, the prieſts themſelves ſubmitted to the layman Nicolas, becauſe they regarded him as the moſt enlightened of their number. Not counſel from men ought we to ſeek after, writes Nicolas in 1356, but that which proceeds from the Holy Spirit; and, ſo long as we have it from that ſource, it is indifferent whether it flow to us through prieſt or layman. In their religious ſervices and faſts they did not ſtrictly obſerve ſtated hours, for they regarded external obſervances as unimportant in themſelves, and only excellent as a means of improvement, or a ſign of

obedience. Thus, while they admitted aſcetic exerciſes and painful penances to be uſeful in the commencement of a religious life, in order to mortify the ſenſual inclinations, they declared them to be afterwards a matter of indifference, nay, ſometimes poſitively contrary to the Divine will. According to Nicolas, if a man have attained to a certain degree of maſtery over nature, then faſting, ſcourging, the wearing of iron girdles, &c., is a ſelf-ſought pain, and as ſuch a ſign that he does not yet allow God to work alone. Moreover, ſuch tormentings may be very detrimental to the body; for though it muſt needs be brought into ſubjection to the ſpirit, yet it ought not to be robbed of its ſtrength; for how elſe ſhould a man ſupport the fatigue of the labours and travels that the "Friends of God" are ſo often called to undertake?

Their doctrine on this point would ſeem to us more judicious than their practice, for it is evident from their writings that they frequently, in fact, carried their auſterities ſo far as to endanger life or reaſon. But Nicolas admirably draws the line between ſuffering that is ſelf-impoſed, and that which God lays upon us. The latter, whether it conſiſt in outward affliction or inward temptation, we are to take joyfully, for it is a proof that God's grace is at work within us; Chriſt, who has endured to the laſt extremity for man, loves pain, and will not ſpare it to his friends. The main thing is that we ſhould find all things good in God, and look at things not as they appear to the world, but as they are in God's ſight. When ſome

of the Straſburg brethren of St. John argue that ſinging and reading in the chapel at fixed hours will hinder them in contemplation, they are cenſured for it by Nicolas, who tells them that theſe acts are preſcribed by the rules of their Order, and though they have in themſelves no merit, yet, if done from obedience, they cannot hinder the motions of grace; even while outwardly buſy, God may be worſhipped by us in ſpirit and in truth, if we put no ſelfish, carnal thoughts between our ſouls and Him. And when Nicolas von Laufen takes umbrage at the ſecular manners of ſome of his brethren who ride about on horſeback clad in ſhort coats, the Layman remarks that he has not yet learnt to find all things right in God, but clings too much to outward diſtinctions. So, again, the renunciation of the world does not in his opinion involve the abſolute giving up of earthly poſſeſſions, as was taught in his day by the Franciſcan Spiritualiſts and others, nor the violent rending aſunder of ſocial ties. Let him who is in an Order that makes poverty a rule, obey that rule; but he who can rightfully hold property is at liberty to retain it, if only he do not ſeek his own ends in the uſe thereof, but God alone. Thus theſe "Friends of God" do not appear to have renounced all control over their property, but merely to have thrown what they regarded as ſuperfluous into a common ſtock, which was applied to the building of their houſe and church, to purpoſes of charity, to defray the expenſes of their miſſionary journeys, &c. This common ſtock was managed by their truſtworthy ſteward Ruprecht, who was the chief if not ſole

medium of communication between Nicolas and his Straſburg friends.

From their ſecluſion, however, they kept a watchful eye upon all that was paſſing in the world around them, went out to thoſe whom there ſeemed a proſpect of winning over, and exerciſed no inconſiderable influence upon thoſe who had put themſelves under their ſpiritual guidance. This was the caſe with many who did not even know Nicolas by name. Thus, Henry von Wolfach, the Maſter of the Brethren of St. John in Straſburg, and even the Grand Maſter of the Order in Germany, Conrad von Brunſberg, and many others, deſire his counſel to ſolve their doubts and direct their proceedings. Meſſengers from Nicolas ſeem to have been perpetually travelling about, who brought him letters from the "Friends of God," ſo that he kept up a conſtant communication, not only with thoſe in the neighbouring regions but alſo with the brethren on the Rhine, in Lorraine, in Italy, and in Hungary. In this manner he became acquainted both with public events and likewiſe with the private affairs of individuals; ſo, for inſtance, he made very remarkable revelations to an Auguſtinian monk in Straſburg reſpecting one of his penitents. Theſe meſſengers had certain ſecret ſigns by which they recognized each other. Thus, Rulman Merſwin was made aware of the preſence of Ruprecht, by hearing a peculiar cough when he was in church. Nicolas himſelf took extraordinary precautions to remain undiſcovered, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that, after Rulman's death, the brethren at the Gruenen-Worth, who had previouſly

received many letters from him, were never able to diſcover his retreat. When thoſe with whom he correſponded deſired to enter into perſonal communication with him, he uſually refuſed it, ſimply ſaying that it could not be. This was the caſe with the vicar of the Biſhop of Straſburg, John von Schaftolſheim, with the Maſter of the Brethren of St. John, in Straſburg, and even with Conrad von Brunſberg. In 1363, he writes that for twenty years he had only been able to reveal himſelf to one perſon, and not until God ſhould take this one from him would he ſeek another; which probably ſignifies that in each city he had but one confidential perſon, through whom he correſponded with all who deſired his counſel. Meanwhile he was active by means of his pen: in 1356, as we have ſeen, Tauler received from him a tractate on the decay of true religion. The alphabetical liſt of rules which he had given to Tauler in 1340, he ſent in 1369 to the prieſts at Gruenen-Worth, and in 1371 to Rulman's ſecretary, Nicolas von Laufen; to the ſame prieſts he ſent the Hiſtory of Tauler; and in 1377, to the Brethren of St. John, he ſends the book containing the Hiſtory of the Five Brethren. It is to theſe circumſtances that we owe the proof of the authenticity of Tauler's life, and the poſſibility of identifying the "man" there mentioned with "the ſecret friend," who meets us in the writings relating to Rulman Merſwin.

Up to 1367, Nicolas and his companions dwelt in a "city in the Oberland," moſt likely Baſle; but in that year, finding it "not helpful" "to live among the common people," they de-

termined on retiring into utter ſecluſion; principally, no doubt, in order to carry on their work unwatched and undiſturbed. In accordance with a dream, as they tell us, which commanded them to take their black dog for a guide, they fixed on a ſite high up on a mountain, far away from any human habitation. This mountain was ſituated in the dominions of the Duke of Auſtria, and for two leagues round there was no town. A meſſenger whom they ſent to the Duke, to requeſt his permiſſion to ſettle here, was taken priſoner in the wars then raging in thoſe countries, and a year had elapſed before they were able to obtain his releaſe. He, however, then brought back the required permiſſion, and they began to build their houſe, in which each was to have his own ſpacious apartment, and there were alſo to be chambers for the reception of foreign brethren as gueſts; but they were prevented from finiſhing the edifice, by the political diſturbances in the neighbourhood, ſo that it remained at a ſtandſtill for ſeven years, and the "Friends" gave up all idea of completing it.

The political and eccleſiaſtical feuds by which the Papal court was diſtracted excited a lively but melancholy intereſt in Nicolas, who conſtantly predicts in his letters that they muſt bring down ſtill heavier judgments at God's hand than even thoſe which had already viſited the world; but when, after his long reſidence in Avignon, Gregory XI. returned to Rome in 1376, a ray of hope that it might yet be poſſible to reſtore unity and concord to the afflicted Church ſeems to have dawned upon his mind, and he felt called on to make a perſonal effort to influence the Pope himſelf.

Accordingly, as we learn from a letter to Henry von Wolfach, in the February of 1377 it was reſolved by the "Friends" that Nicolas and the Juriſt ſhould repair to Rome; the Jew, John, offered to raiſe funds to defray the expenſes of the journey from among his relatives,—Jews who harboured a ſecret inclination towards Chriſtianity. The ſeverity of the Alpine winter and an attack of illneſs which befel Nicolas, now above ſeventy years of age, cauſed the journey to be poſtponed till the end of March. I extract from the account of the "Friends of God" given in Rulman Merſwin's *Briefbuch** the following narrative of their miſſion and its reſults: "And when they came to Rome, the Layman (Rul-
"man's ſecret friend)† made inquiry after a Roman whom he had
"known a long time before, and found him yet living. And
"this Roman received the two 'Friends of God' in a very friendly
"faſhion, and would take no denial, but they, with their
"ſervants, and horſes, and carriages, muſt lodge with him ſo
"long as their affairs kept them in Rome; and he entertained
"them moſt courteouſly with all manner of good cheer. Then
"he ſaid to the Layman: 'Methinks it is ſomewhat ſtrange that
"'thou in thine old age ſhouldſt come to court from ſuch a
"'diſtant land, unleſs it be upon ſome urgent occaſion.' Then

* The account itſelf ſays, "As the Layman wrote to Rulman Merſwin and Brother Nicolas "von Laufen;" but theſe letters are not among thoſe preſerved.

† The name by which Nicolas is always deſignated, except where he is called "the Dear "Friend of God in the Oberland."

"the Layman anſwered: 'So it is: we muſt ſpeak to our Holy "Father upon very weighty affairs.' Then ſaid the Roman: "I ſhall be able to bring you into his preſence, for I am very "familiar with him, and often dine at his table.' And he "procured that the Pope ſhould give them a privy hearing on "the third day after. . . . So they came into the preſence of "Pope Gregory, and the Juriſt ſpoke to him in Latin, and the "Layman in Italian, ſince he could not ſpeak Latin, and ſaid, "among much other diſcourſe: 'Holy Father, there be many "grievous and heinous crimes wrought throughout Chriſtendom "by all degrees of men, whereby God's anger is greatly pro-"voked; thou oughteſt to conſider how to put an end to theſe "evils.' But he anſwered: 'I have no power to amend matters.' "Then they told him of his own ſecret faults, which had been "revealed to them of God by certain evident tokens, and ſaid, "'Holy Father, know of a truth, that if you do not put away "your evil doings and utterly amend your ways, you ſhall die "within a year,' as alſo came to paſs. When the Pope heard "theſe words of rebuke, he was enraged beyond meaſure; but "they anſwered and ſaid: 'Holy Father, take us captive, and if "we cannot give you evident tokens, then kill us and do what "you will with us.' . . . And when they declared to him theſe "tokens, he roſe up from his throne, and embraced them and "kiſſed them on the mouth, and ſaid to the Layman, 'Let us "'talk together in Italian, ſince thou canſt not ſpeak Latin.' "And they had much loving diſcourſe together; and among

"other things the Pope ſaid, 'Could you tell the Emperor as
"'much as you have told me, you would indeed do a good
"'ſervice to Chriſtendom.' And afterwards the Pope prayed
"the two 'Friends of God' that they ſhould ſtay with him in
"Rome, and he offered to provide them all things needful, and
"alſo to follow their counſel. But they anſwered, 'Holy Father,
"ſuffer us to return home; and we will be at all times
"obedient to come if you ſend for us. For we ſeek no earthly
"gain, nor have we come hither for the ſake of ſuch; we ſeek
"only God's glory and the welfare of Chriſtendom above all
"the periſhable gifts of this preſent time.' Then he inquired
"of them where their home might be; and when they ſaid,
"'We have long dwelt in ſuch a town,' he marvelled that ſuch
"'Friends of God' ſhould dwell among the common people.
"Thereupon they told him [all that had happened], and how
"they had been hindered in their building. Then the Pope
"would have given them a biſhopric and other revenues and
"grants, but they would not have them. . . . [But the Pope
"gave them letters recommending their cauſe to the Biſhop and
"clergy of their dioceſe.] Now when theſe two dear 'Friends of
"God' had ſettled their affairs with the Pope, and deſired to
"depart from Rome, their hoſt would not ſuffer them to pay for
"anything that they had had in his houſe . . . and moreover
"gave the layman a good ambling horſe inſtead of the heavy
"carriage in which he had come, ſaying that a ſoft-paced horſe
"would be much eaſier for him to ride over the high mountains

"than the carriage, ſeeing that he was old and weakly. Now "afterward the Pope was unmindful of God's meſſage, and "obeyed it not, and died that ſame year as they had propheſied— "to wit, about the fourth week in Lent, 1378."

On returning to their mountain, they found that the Biſhop of their dioceſe was ſojourning in a city thirteen leagues diſtant. It was reſolved that the two who had been with the Pope ſhould ride with his letter to the Biſhop to entreat aid for the completion of their houſe. The prelate received them favourably, and gave them letters to the clergy of the town that lay neareſt to their eſtate. On this, all the five brethren repaired thither, where the prieſts read from the pulpit the letters of recommendation which they had brought from the Pope and the Biſhop. The magiſtrates alſo took up their cauſe, promiſing to ſend them armed men to protect their ſettlement in time of diſturbance, and offering them beſides a houſe in the town for a temporary abode, and in which they could alſo take refuge if neceſſary; and further ſent them on leaving a complimentary preſent of fiſh and wine by the hand of their officers. Three foreign brethren, who had for ſome time cheriſhed the wiſh to be received into their ſociety, made over to them the whole of their property, in order to finiſh the houſe and erect the church. Thus aided, the little band were at length able to ſettle down in the home they had choſen. But, as far as we can gather from the obſcure traces of their ſubſequent hiſtory, it does not appear that they were allowed to enjoy for more than a few years the retreat for which they had ſighed ſo long.

In the ſame year (1377), Nicolas learns from ſeveral foreign "Friends of God" that the Church is on the point of falling into great peril, doubtleſs from the growing diſcord which threatened all the convulſions of anarchy; and he foreſees that things may come to paſs which would conſtrain the "Friends of God" to ſeparate and divide themſelves over the world; but in the meantime their part is to remain in concealment till "God ſhall do "ſomething, we know not what as yet." Meanwhile he entreats the prayers of his friends, for they are greatly troubled in mind, and know not what will come of it. It is evident from ſuch dark hints as theſe that Nicolas and his friends now began to contemplate the poſſibility of their duty calling them to uſe more public means of influence than the private, though by no means inactive or inefficient, line of conduct they had hitherto purſued. They muſt have foreſeen the painful colliſion that was impending between their deep reverence for the outward authority of the Church and the inward authority of the indwelling light. Neither can they have been without forebodings of the martyr's doom, which actually befell all thoſe of whoſe fate any traces are left; though we may well believe, from all we know of them, that this would occaſion them far leſs anxiety and diſtreſs than the queſtion whether they were acting moſt for the intereſts of the Church by continuing their preſent ſilent and therefore undisturbed efforts to influence the ſpiritual leaders of the people; or by going out among the people themſelves, to call them to repentance, and proclaim doctrines which, however true, might unſettle

the foundations of their traditional belief;—the difficulty and perplexity which in many ages meets and torments minds of the prophetic order.

In the following year, the great ſchiſm that had been dimly foretold, broke out, and for forty years the church was divided between two heads; Urban VI. was elected at Rome, under the influence of terror at the violence of the inſurgent mob; and ſoon after, in ſubſervience to the French party, Clement VII. et Fondi, who immediately haſtened to Avignon. When theſe tidings reached the "Friends of God," it ſeemed to them that the time was come when the threatened judgments of God were about to burſt over the world. It was, indeed, intelligence fitted to ſhake all hearts, for, as the brethren of Gruenen-worth write: "After God has been warning the world for theſe forty years "paſt, by deadly diſeaſes and earthquakes, famines, and a wild, "maſterleſs folk,* laying waſte many lands, He is now ſending us "a plague that is worſe than all the reſt, becauſe it attacks our "faith; namely, the diſſenſions of Chriſtendom, in which all the "wiſdom of nature, of Scripture, and of the grace of the Holy "Spirit is ſo utterly dried up and extinct, that all our learned "doctors and wiſe prieſts have loſt their way, and know not "which to chooſe of theſe two Popes, that they may help to bring "back unity to Chriſtendom, and peace to the See of Rome."

* The hordes known by the name of "Engliſhmen," who for ſeveral years after 1361 ravaged France, Lorraine, and Alſace.

Their Maſter wiſhed in this perplexity to repair for counſel to the 'Friends of God,' but Nicolas forbade him, ſaying: "Have you "not the Holy Scripture? Are you not a profeſſor in the chair? "Why ſhould you aſk counſel from the creature? Stop, and wait "till God Himſelf ſhall conſtrain you to come to us. It is not yet "time for us to reveal ourſelves; but it may ſoon come to paſs "that we ſlip from our covert, to be ſcattered abroad over the "world, and if ſo, I ſhall come to Straſburg and make myſelf "known to you."

It is, however, evident that the "Friends of God," though concealed, were by no means paſſive at this time; what ſpecial plans they cheriſhed are unknown, but that they had ſuch is clear from all their proceedings. So early as November, 1377, Nicolas had been with the prieſt, John, in Metz, on ſome buſineſs with which we are not acquainted. During 1378, much conſultation by means of meſſengers and letters muſt have taken place, for on the 17th of March, in the following year, Nicolas (as he relates in a letter to Henry von Wolfach), with ſeven other brethren, met in ſome wild place high up among the mountains, near a chapel hewn out in a rock, cloſe to which a prieſt dwelt with two young brethren in a little hermitage. Four out of the ſeven were laymen, the other three ordained prieſts. Nicolas, whether from humility or not, ſpeaks of himſelf as one of the leaſt among them. From his letter it would ſeem that the chief purpoſe of this meeting was united prayer to God, to avert the "dreadful ſtorm" that was menacing

the Chriſtian world, that there might be ſpace left for amendment. A week was devoted to theſe ſupplications; every afternoon the brethren went out into the foreſt, and ſat down "beſide "a fair brook," to converſe upon the matters on which they had come hither. At length, on the laſt day, while thus aſſembled, a ſtorm of wind came on, followed by a thick darkneſs, which they took for a work of the evil ſpirits. After the ſtorm had laſted an hour, there came a pleaſant light, and the ſweet voice of an inviſible angel announced to them that God had heard their prayer, and ſtayed His chaſtiſements for a year; but when this was ended, they ſhould entreat Him no more, for the Father would no longer delay to take vengeance on the deſpiſers of His Son. After this the "Friends of God" returned back again each to his own place. Reſpecting the courſe they reſolved to purſue, all that we can make out from the vague hints in the letters of Nicolas is, that they interpreted the promiſe of the angel to mean that they were to wait a year longer before quitting their concealment and taking an open and active part in the affairs of the world; the only thing that is diſtinctly ſtated is, that it was reſolved once more to try the effect of perſonal remonſtrances with the Pope. Nicolas himſelf was entruſted with this miſſion, which, however, from ſome unknown cauſe, was not carried out. Meanwhile, according to the intelligence received from the brethren in foreign parts reſpecting the progreſs of the ſchiſm, affairs were aſſuming a more and more gloomy aſpect; the confuſion and perplexity occaſioned by the preſence of two Popes was

continually increaſing; the Chriſtian world was ſplitting into two parties; even the ſecular authority was in danger of diſruption and ſubverſion. The time drew nearer and nearer when Nicolas believed himſelf called on to begin to work among the common people; already in June, 1379, he calls on the Strasburg Maſter to warn the people in his ſermons, and hold up before them the teſtimonies of Scripture concerning their duties in ſuch a criſis.

As the end of the year approached, during which the "Friends of God" were to wait, they agreed to hold another meeting. All the accounts relating to this conference (the lateſt diſtinctly recorded intelligence we have reſpecting this extraordinary band of aſſociates), are ſo mixed up with the ſymbolical and the marvellous, that it is extremely difficult to make out the real facts of the caſe. According to the narrative given by Nicolas to Rulman Merſwin, he, with twelve other "Friends of God," were at Chriſtmas, 1379, warned by dreams to aſſemble together on the following Holy Thurſday, at the ſame place where the ſeven brethren had met the year before. So early as February ſome of the foreign brethren arrived at the abode of Nicolas: one from the country of the "Lords of Meiglon," (probably Milan); two from Hungary, whom he had known thirty years before; one from Genoa, a rich burgher, with whom Nicolas was not previously acquainted. On Holy Thurſday, the 22nd of March, they met at the little chapel in the rock, and, after receiving the ſacrament on Good Friday morning, repaired, as before, to the wood, and ſat down beſide the ſtream to begin their deliberations.

What paſſed during theſe conferences is only related in the form of marvellous viſions and fantaſtic occurrences. After tempeſts and diabolical apparitions, a bright light ſurrounds the place, and an inviſible ſpeaker tells them that the impending plagues ſhall be ſtayed for three years longer, on condition of their obeying the injunctions contained in a letter which thereupon drops down in their midſt. Theſe commands are ſomewhat myſterious: the "Friends of God" are to withdraw from their ordinary communications with the world, except in the caſe of thoſe who deſire their counſel; to receive the ſacrament three times a week, &c.; and after three years they ſhall receive further commands from God. After they have declared their readineſs to obey the letter, they are told by the ſame voice to light a fire, and throw it in. Inſtead of burning, it riſes up in the fire, a flaſh of lightning meets the flame, and catches up fire and letter together to heaven, after which there is nothing more to be ſeen; and the brethren depart to their reſpective homes. The brethren in the Oberland commence their period of retreat at Whitſuntide, after a high maſs has been performed by the prieſt John in their newly-finiſhed church. Nicolas writes beforehand to Rulman Merſwin releaſing him from his obedience, and recommending him to take the Maſter Henry von Wolfach for a confeſſor in his ſtead. To the latter, who had again applied to know what courſe the "Friends of God" meant to take with regard to the rival Popes, Nicolas replies with his uſual caution, that the Brethren of St. John could not regulate their conduct in theſe matters by

that of the "Friends of God;" for they were bound to obey the dictates of their ſuperiors in the Order, while the latter had received many privileges from Pope Gregory, and were, moreover, only ſubject to their Biſhop, who did not preſs them for a deciſion.

It is certainly very difficult to know in what light to regard the marvellous accounts that meet us in the writings of Rulman and Nicolas. Some of them ſeem to be ſimply ſymbolical; for it is clear that they were in the habit of preſenting their views of human affairs under the form of an allegory, ſuppoſed to be ſeen in a viſion or dream, juſt as Bunyan does in his "Pilgrim's Progreſs." This is the caſe with Rulman's Book of the Nine Rocks, Chriſtiana Ebner's viſion of the Cloſed Cathedral, and ſome unimportant viſions occurring in the letters of Nicolas.* But the caſe is different when wonders are related, as far as we can ſee, as ſimple matters of fact. That, however, the "Friends of God" expected, and ſo were ready to receive without much heſitation as to their reality, not only direct ſpiritual communications from the Divine Being, but alſo miraculous interpoſitions in phyſical things, is perfectly clear; and thus they were undoubtedly open to all the ſelf-deception in theſe matters which may ariſe from intenſe emotion and mental excitement acting on frames diſordered by aſceticiſm. Swoons under the preſſure of religious emotion are with them, as with the Methodiſts of the laſt century, a matter of continual occurrence; and with them, as

* See, for inſtance, his viſion of the Three Birds. (Schmidt's *Gottesfreunde*, S. 147.)

with the early Methodiſts, ſeem to have been not unfrequently the criſis of a ſtate of overwrought phyſical and mental excitement, after which they regained a calmer and healthier condition both of body and mind, with an addition of ſpiritual experience and enlightenment. Such an occurrence as a letter falling from heaven preſents much greater difficulties. It is poſſible that Nicolas may have intended the whole ſtory rather as an allegory than as matter of fact; if he regarded it in the latter light, it muſt have been the reſult either of a terribly over-ſtrained imagination, or of fraud on the part of ſome unknown perſon. But to ſuppoſe that a man of ſo much ſimple holineſs and practical wiſdom as Nicolas appears to us, ſhould have taken part in juggling tricks of ſuch dreadful impiety in order to perſuade his aſſociates that the courſe he judged beſt was preſcribed to them by Heaven, is, I confeſs, a larger demand upon my powers of credence than they are able to meet. Moreover, we muſt judge theſe accounts by the age in which they were produced,—an age when the mental food of the pious laity was the life of St. Francis with his five wounds and blaſphemous "conformities" to the life of our Lord, and other works of a ſimilar nature. And it muſt be remembered that the leaders of this party—Nicolas, Rulman, John,—were laymen whoſe not large ſtock of erudition was ſelf-acquired, comparatively late in life. In the writings of the ſcholar Tauler (though, in common with all his contemporaries, he believes in ghoſts and heavenly viſions) we find ſcarcely a trace of the fanatical credulity that meets us in the letters of

theſe lay friends of his, if we are to take their ſtatements as literal and not ſymbolical repreſentations of fact. Even ſo doing, however, if we compare them with the ſtories contained in the ſtaple religious literature of the day, or even in the life of Suſo, Tauler's companion and friend, Nicolas and his friends, wild as they may ſeem to us rational Proteſtants, will appear ſcarcely to leave the regions of ſober common ſenſe;* and it is remarkable that, in moſt of the practical queſtions that ariſe with regard to ſelf-diſcipline, he takes the moderate and judicious ſide.

Whatever interpretation, however, we may be inclined to put upon the marvellous circumſtances attending the above-mentioned conference, it ſeems tolerably clear that the three years' ſo-called ſecluſion of the "Friends of God" was regarded by them as a time of preparation for their public work, when they ſhould be "ſcattered abroad over Chriſtendom;" and that by their retirement, they were breaking the ties that bound them to thoſe who had hitherto depended on them for guidance, and accuſtoming them to act for themſelves againſt a time when they ſhould no longer have their wonted counſellors at hand. Probably, too, the brethren took this courſe partly from the deſire that their ſpiritual children ſhould not be involved in the perſe-

* This will, I think, ſeem no exaggerated expreſſion to any reader who will take the pains to conſult only Diepenbrock's Life of Suſo (Ratiſbon, 1829), with Gorres' Introduction to it, and ſo ſee for himſelf the ſpace that ſeparates the Romiſh from our Proteſtant point of view in theſe matters; not forgetting, meanwhile, that the Editor Diepenbrock was the ſecretary of the learned Biſhop Sailer, the leader of the moſt liberal party among the Catholics of almoſt our own day.

cutions which they could not but perceive to threaten themſelves, but might continue to work for the cauſe of true religion in their reſpective ſpheres, unhindered by the ſuſpicions of hereſy, which any known connexion with the "Friends of God" would have brought upon them. Not that there is any ſign of the "Friends of God" having been heretical in point of dogma; it was rather the remarkable freedom with which they criticized the conduct both of the ſpiritual and temporal authorities that was likely to bring them into trouble. Thus, in one of their meetings juſt before their retreat, the brother who had been a Juriſt ſays, that if offices in Church and State were conferred in accordance with God's law, neither Urban nor Clement deſerved to be Pope; the former had been appointed by the Roman mob through violent means, and the latter was now defending himſelf by ſimilar acts of violence, which was contrary to juſtice and God's order. So likewiſe, the King of Rome had obtained the crown after a ſhameful faſhion (1376), for his father had bought the votes of the electors with gold; how the electors could reconcile it with their oath to chooſe an inexperienced boy for their king, God only knew; with the ſubjects matters did not ſtand much better: they obeyed their rulers only so long as it ſerved their own intereſts to do ſo; a godly life was almoſt extinct, everywhere prevailed nought but the ſtriving after riches and pleaſures.* This paſſage throws much light on the views

* See Schmidt's *Gottesfreunde*, S. 170.

and aims of the "Friends of God," and enables us to form an idea of what muſt have been the frequent topics of diſcuſſion among them.

With the ceſſation of the correſpondence between Nicolas and Rulman Merſwin, ceaſes our only ſource of information about the "Friends of God." Their term of waiting expired on the 25th March, 1383; and ſince we know from contemporary hiſtory, that the courſe of events, inſtead of bringing brighter proſpects, grew ever darker and more threatening, we ſeem juſtified in concluding that they now believed the time to have arrived for them "to go out into the five ends of the world," and work for Chriſt. Moſt likely they went forth as preachers of repentance, for there occur in the letters of Nicolas frequent compariſons of the preſent ſtate of the world to that of Nineveh, and hints that they may have to act the part of Jonah. But where, and how long they did ſo, is wrapt in utter darkneſs. As far as we can learn, Providence did not ſee fit to bleſs their preaching like that of Jonah, and, to human eyes, their enterpriſe was a failure. For all we actually know reſpecting their ſubſequent hiſtory is, that in 1393 a certain Martin von Mayence, a Benedictine monk of Reichenau, in the dioceſe of Conſtance, who is called in the acts of his trial a diſciple of Nicolas of Baſle and a "Friend of God," was burnt at Cologne, after the ſame fate had befallen ſome other "Friends of God," a ſhort time before, at Heidelberg. Active reſearches were made after Nicolas, but as he had concealed himſelf from his friends, ſo for a long

time he was able to elude the efforts of his perſecutors. At length, on a journey which he had undertaken into France, in order to diffuſe his doctrines, accompanied by two of his diſciples, James and John (the latter moſt likely the converted Jew who always appears as his boſom friend), he fell into the hands of the Inquiſitors at Vienne, in the dioceſe of Poitiers. He was brought to trial, and perſiſted firmly and publicly in his hereſies, the moſt "audacious" of which ſeems to have been that he pretended to "know that he was in Chriſt, and Chriſt in him." He was therefore delivered over to the ſecular power, and periſhed in the flames, together with his two diſciples, who refuſed to be parted from him.*

Since, in the trial of Martin of Mayence, Nicolas is ſpoken

* The following note, inſerted by Schmidt in his *Tauler*, S. 205, is, I believe, the only ſource of information we have reſpecting the end of the Layman :—

"*Joban Niederus, formicarius*, Arg. 1517, 4to. F. 40, &c.: Vivebat paulo ante [the "Council of Piſa] quidam purum laicus, Nycholaus nomine. Hic in linea Rheni circa Baſiliam et "infra, primum velut Beghardus ambulans, a multis qui perſequebantur hereticos, de eorundem "hereticorum numero quaſi unus habebatur ſuſpectiſſimus. Acutiſſimus enim erat, et verbis "errores coloratiſſime velare novit. Idcirco etiam manus inquiſitorum dudum evaſerat et multo "tempore. Diſcipulos igitur quoſdam in ſuam ſectam collegit. Fuit enim profeſſione et habitu "de damnatis Beghardis unus, qui viſiones et revelationes in praedicto damnato habitu multas "habuit quas infallibiles eſſe credidit. Se ſcire affirmabat audacter quod Chriſtus in eo eſſet "actu, et ipſe in Chriſto, et plura alia, quae omnia, captus tandem Wiennae in Pictavienſi dioceſi, "inquiſitus fatebatur publice. Sed cum Jacobum et Joannem ſuſpectos in fide, et ſibi conſcios "ſuos ſpeciales diſcipulos, ad juſſum eccleſiae eum inquirenti nollet dimittere niſi per ignem, "et reportis in multis a vera fide devius et imperſuaſibilis, ſecularium poteſtati juſte traditus eſt "qui eum incinerarunt."

of as ſtill living, his death moſt likely occurred ſubſequently to that date, but cannot have taken place much later, as he muſt then have been near ninety years of age. Even before this time, the Straſburg brethren had loſt all trace of the "Friends of God," and their frequent attempts to diſcover them had proved utterly unavailing;* no doubt, becauſe the convent which they ſought to find was already deſerted, and its inmates, whoſe names they had never known, were ſcattered abroad in fulfilment of their vocation. That which appears to have formed the chief ground of their perſecution, was their effort to free the people from the tyranny of the clergy, and their claiming for every one enlightened by God the right to teach,—a claim antagoniſtic to the inmoſt eſſence of the Romiſh Church. And if their teaching failed to effect a wide reformation becauſe it was mingled with ſome of the great errors of Rome, and in place of prieſtly authority over men's conſciences ſet up that of their brethren, whoſe inſpiration was often not leſs doubtful, yet we cannot but recogniſe in it the germs of the true freedom of the Goſpel, as well as the great and all-eſſential truth that the Chriſtian life does not conſiſt in outward works, but in the inward union of the ſpirit with God.

* A detailed account of theſe attempts is given in Schmidt's *Gottesfreunde*, S. 29.

SERMONS

OF THE

REVEREND DOCTOR JOHN TAULER.

I.

Sermon for the Firſt Sunday in Advent.

(From the Epiſtle for the day.)

How that we are called upon to ariſe from our ſins, and to conquer our foes, looking for the glorious coming of Our Lord in our ſouls.

ROM. xiii. 2.—"Now it is high time to awake out of ſleep."

THIS day we celebrate the beginning of the ſeaſon of Advent, that is to ſay, the coming of our Lord; and now, indeed, we enter on an exceeding ſweet and bleſſed time, concerning which very devout and joyful words are read and ſung by the holy Church. For as May excels all other months in gladneſs and delights, ſo is this ſeaſon ſpecially dear to our hearts, and ſacred above all other feſtivals. For theſe are the days which the prophets and righteous men of the Old Teſtament for

The ſignificance and glory of the ſeaſon of Advent.

five thouſand years have longed and ſighed for, crying out—"Oh that thou wouldſt rend the heavens and "come down, to enlighten thoſe who are ſitting in "darkneſs and the ſhadow of death." And, indeed, all the hiſtories and ſymbols of the Old Teſtament are deſigned to ſhadow forth the greatneſs of Him who ſhould come, and who now has come. O let us, therefore, give thanks and praiſe to God without ceaſing, that He has made us to live in this His time of grace, and is ready to beſtow all His gifts and riches upon us if we are but willing to receive them.

The duties to which this ſeaſon doth call us.

And now, as at this time, does the holy Apoſtle call upon us to ariſe from the ſleep of ſin, "for the "night is far ſpent, and the day is at hand: let us, "therefore, caſt off the works of darkneſs, and let us "put on the armour of light, and let us walk honeſtly "as in the day."

Now to this end, let us mark diligently, firſt, how it is that we have fallen; and, ſecondly, how we are to ariſe from all our ſins and infirmities into our firſt ſtate of innocence.

How we have fallen through diſobedience;

God created man to the intent that he ſhould poſſeſs thoſe manſions in the kingdom of heaven from which Lucifer and his angels were thruſt out. The ſame Lucifer, for his deadly hatred towards man, hath ſeduced him likewiſe into diſobedience againſt God, by the which he loſt all the graces and endowments that were intended to make him like unto God and the angels, and poiſoned his own pure nature, ſo that it became corrupt. And through this poiſon man has wounded himſelf mortally with blindneſs in his reaſon, with perverſeneſs or malice in his will, with

ſhameful luſts in his appetites, and with loſs of his juſt indignation at ſin. Man, being in honour, underſtood it not, and is become like unto the beaſts that periſh.

and of the three foes which have riſen up againſt us.

And hence it has come to paſs that three foes have riſen up againſt him, who, alas! on all ſides have got the upper hand, and are ruling in the hearts of the people: theſe are, the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. Where theſe three have their will, that noble thing, the Soul, is loſt, on which God hath looked with ſuch great love; for thoſe in whom they obtain the maſtery do moſt ſurely walk in a way that leadeth unto eternal death. How cruelly and perilouſly theſe three enemies now reign in numbers of men, both in the Church and in the world, ſtanding in God's place, is bewailed with bitter tears by the friends of God, who love Him and ſeek His glory. For the everlaſting injury of their fellow-creatures is a ſore grief to ſuch men, inſomuch that their heart is ready to dry up within their body for anguiſh, when they ſee ſelf-love ſo rooted in men's hearts, that there be few left who wholly love God and have a ſingle eye to His glory.

How the World rules.

The World rules through pride, outward or inward. How many are members of this Devil's Order! They deſire to be and appear to be ſomewhat; while their ſins and infirmities are not to be numbered.

How the Devil rules.

The Devil's government leads to bitterneſs, to hatred and anger, to ſuſpicion, to judging others, to revenge, to ill-will, to diſcord. All his diſciples are quarrelſome, unloving, envious of their neighbours.

How the

The will of our own Fleſh is ſet upon earthly plea-

Fleſh doth lead us aſtray.

ſures and ſenſual delights, and it craveth to have the beſt of everything, and continually to find enjoyment in all things. How great is the miſchief that ſprings from this fountain, people do not know, eſpecially thoſe who are themſelves blinded through it. By theſe three foes are nearly all men led aſtray to their eternal loſs.

By what means we may riſe unto our firſt eſtate.

Now he who deſires to riſe again to his firſt honour and dignity, which Adam at the beginning, and we after him, have loſt through ſin, and to make way for the coming of Our Lord in his ſoul, muſt flee the world, overcome the Devil, bring his fleſh under dominion to his reaſon, and exerciſe himſelf diligently in theſe ſix points following :—

Man fell in Paradiſe through two things,—luſt and pride; ſo likewiſe we muſt return by means of two things, for nature to win back again her original powers. We muſt reſiſt and die to all irregular deſires, after a manly and reaſonable ſort. In the ſecond place, we muſt humble ourſelves, and bow our nature down to the earth in deep humility before God and all men againſt whom it had lifted itſelf with pride. Take always the loweſt place, and ſo ſhalt thou riſe to the higheſt. By theſe two things nature recovers her original powers.

How we muſt be like unto the angels,

Next, in two things man muſt become like unto the angels. He muſt pardon and forgive all thoſe who do him wrong, and be from his heart the friend of his enemies, like the angels, whom we ofttimes vex with our ſins. Further, he muſt ſerve his neighbour with a willing ſpirit, as the holy angels are ever miniſtering to us for God's ſake

Laſtly, in two things man muſt become like unto our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Firſt, in perfect obedience, as our Lord was obedient to His Heavenly Father, even unto death; ſecondly, he muſt perſevere and grow in obedience and in all virtues, unto his life's end.

and like unto our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

By theſe means the heart is made pure and heavenly, and the man becomes of one mind with God through deep humility, free ſelf-ſurrender, patient long-ſuffering, true poorneſs of ſpirit, and fervent love to God. And all who do verily ſeek the kingdom of God (of whom, alas! how few is the number), do prevail againſt their foes, and God delivers them from their heavy burdens, and helps them to bear all their afflictions. For He lays upon them much ſuffering of many kinds; but the righteous God does this to the intent that four ends may be accompliſhed in them. The firſt, that they may come to themſelves, and ſee whence their trouble cometh, and that their thoughts may be turned upon themſelves by reaſon of the pain, and ſo be fixed. The ſecond, that they may examine why God has laid the burden of pain upon them; and when they perceive God's purpoſe in their ſufferings, let them ſtrive to fulfil that, and reſign themſelves wholly to His divine will. The third, that they may come out from themſelves, and from all creatures. The fourth, that they may learn true patience under diverſe afflictions. But what is true patience under affliction? Is it to remain unmoved by outward things? No. True patience is that a man ſhould feel in his inmoſt ſoul, and in utter ſincerity thus judge, that no one could or might do him a real in-

How God defendeth and upholdeth unto the end thoſe who verily ſeek His kingdom.

Of true patience.

juſtice, but always remember that he is receiving no worſe than his deſerts, for he might juſtly have far more to ſuffer and endure; inſomuch that he may feel nothing but gentleneſs and compaſſion towards all who do him wrong. Such men are followers of Chriſt, our humble Maſter, in whom He reigns, and to whom He ſaid: "If ye continue in my word, then "are ye my diſciples indeed; and ye ſhall know the "truth, and the truth ſhall make you free."

John viii. 31, 32.

Of the two ſorts of men who follow Chriſt's word.

Now there are two ſorts of men who follow after the word of Chriſt. The one ſort hear it with joy, and follow after it as far as they are able with their reaſon to perceive its truth, and take it in juſt in the ſame way as their reaſon takes in what is concerned with the world of ſenſe; and all this they do by means of their natural light, but they make no account of anything that they themſelves do not feel or enter into; but with theſe natural powers of theirs, they are ever running out to catch up and underſtand ſome new thing. They have not learnt by experience that they ought to die to this reſtleſſneſs; but if they are ever to grow better men, they muſt try another road.

Of thoſe who follow it by their natural reaſon.

Of thoſe who look for God's leadings from within.

But the other ſort turn their thoughts inward, and remain reſting on the inmoſt foundation of their ſouls, ſimply looking to ſee the hand of God with the eyes of their enlightened reaſon, and await from within their ſummons and their call to go whither God would have them. And this they receive from God without any means; but what is given through means, ſuch as other mortal men, for inſtance, is as it were taſteleſs; moreover, it is ſeen as through a veil, and ſplit up into fragments, and bears within it

a certain ſting of bitterneſs. It always retains the ſavour of that which is of the creature, which it muſt needs loſe and be purified from, if it is to become in truth food for the ſpirit, and to enter into the very ſubſtance of the ſoul. For thoſe who perceive God's gifts and leadings from within, whether by the help of means or without means, do receive them from their fountain-head, and carry them back again unto their fountain-head in the Divine goodneſs. Theſe are they who draw and drink from the true well, of which Chriſt ſaid: "Whoſoever drinketh of the water "that I ſhall give him ſhall never thirſt." But the firſt of whom we ſpoke are ſeeking their own things; wherever they are, and whatever they do, they are always ſtanding upon their own foundation. Yet, in truth, they can never find their own good ſo certain and ſo unmixed, as in its inward ſource, without the aid of means.

How we may perceive God's leadings.

Now you may aſk, How can we come to perceive this direct leading of God? By a careful looking at home, and abiding within the gates of thy own ſoul. Therefore, let a man be at home in his own heart, and ceaſe from his reſtleſs chaſe of and ſearch after outward things. If he is thus at home while on earth, he will ſurely come to ſee what there is to do at home,—what God commands him inwardly without means, and alſo outwardly by the help of means; and then let him ſurrender himſelf, and follow God along whatever path his loving Lord thinks fit to lead him: whether it be to contemplation or action, to uſefulneſs or enjoyment; whether in ſorrow or in joy, let him follow on. And if God do not give

How we ſhould follow Chriſt in the three aims of His life; to wit:

him thus to feel His hand in all things, let him ſtill ſimply yield himſelf up, and go without for God's ſake, out of love, and ſtill preſs forward, ſetting ever before him the lovely example of our Bleſſed Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who did all His works for three ends:

the glory of His Heavenly Father,

The firſt was, that in all His doings He ſought the glory of His Heavenly Father only, and not His own in any matter, whether great or ſmall, and committed all things into His hands again.

the ſalvation of men,

The ſecond was, that with His whole heart he purpoſed and ſought the ſalvation and bleſſedneſs of men, that He might lay hold on all men, and bring them to the acknowledgment of His Name, according to the words of St. Paul: "God will have all men to be "ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

the ſetting forth of a perfect life.

The third end which He kept in view, in all His words, and works, and life, was, that He might give us a true example and model of a perfect life in its higheſt form.

Of thoſe who do thus follow Chriſt.

The men who thus tread in His ſteps do become, in very truth, the nobleſt and moſt glorious of their race; and thoſe who are thus born again into His life, are the rich and coſtly jewels of the Holy Chriſtian Church, and in all ages they work out the higheſt good, while they look not to the greatneſs or meanneſs of their work, nor to their ſucceſs or failure, but look only to the will of God in all things; and for this cauſe all their works are the beſt that may be. Neither do they look whether God will place them high or low, for the only thing they care for is, that in all things alike God's will may be done. God grant that it may be thus with each of us. Amen.

II.

Sermon for the Second Sunday in Advent.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

*How that God is very near to us, and how we muſt ſeek and find the Kingdom of God within us, without reſpect to time and place.**

Luke xxi. 31.—"Know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

OUR Lord ſays here that the kingdom of God is nigh to us. Yea, the kingdom of God is in us; and St. Paul ſays, that now is our ſalvation nearer to us than we believe.

Now ye ought to know, firſt, *how* the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; ſecondly, *when* the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

How the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Now we muſt give earneſt heed to take note of all that is contained in theſe words, "The kingdom of "God is nigh at hand." For if I were a king, and did not know it, I ſhould be no king; but if I were fully convinced that I was a king, and if all men deemed me ſo likewiſe, and further, if I knew that all men deemed me ſuch, I ſhould be a king, and all the riches of the king would be mine. But if any of theſe three things were wanting, I could be no king. In like manner does our bleſſedneſs depend upon our

In what true

* This Sermon is believed to be by Maſter Eckhart.

bleſſedneſs conſiſts.

perceiving and knowing the Higheſt Good, which is God Himſelf. I have a power in my ſoul which enables me to perceive God: I am as certain as that I live that nothing is ſo near to me as God. He is nearer to me than I am to myſelf. It is a part of His very eſſence that He ſhould be nigh and preſent to me. He is alſo nigh to a ſtone or a tree, but they do not know it. If a tree could know God, and perceive His preſence as the higheſt of the angels perceives it, the tree would be as bleſſed as the higheſt angel. And it is becauſe man is capable of perceiving God, and knowing how nigh God is to him, that he is better off than a tree. And he is more bleſſed or leſs bleſſed in the ſame meaſure as he is aware of the preſence of God. It is not becauſe God is in him, and ſo cloſe to him, and he hath God, that he is bleſſed, but becauſe he perceives God's preſence, and knows and loves Him; and ſuch an one will feel that God's kingdom is nigh at hand.

What is the kingdom of God.

Often, when I meditate on the kingdom of God, I cannot ſpeak for the greatneſs thereof. For the kingdom of God, what is it but God Himſelf with all His riches? The kingdom of God is no ſmall thing. If we think of all the worlds that God could create, that is not the kingdom of God. When the kingdom of God is manifeſted in a ſoul, and ſhe knows it, you need not to preach or to teach; for that ſoul is taught of God, and aſſured of eternal life. He who knows and perceives how nigh God's kingdom is, may ſay with Jacob: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I "knew it not."

How God is

God is alike near in all creatures. The wiſe man

ſays: "God hath ſpread out His nets and ſnares over "all creatures, ſo that he who deſireth to perceive "Him, may find Him in every one of them."

everywhere alike near to the ſoul.

A Maſter has ſaid: "He knoweth God aright who "knoweth him in all things alike." He who ſerveth God with fear, it is good; he who ſerveth Him with love, it is better; but he who in fear can love, that is the beſt of all. That a man ſhould have a life of quiet or reſt in God is good; that a man ſhould lead a painful life in patience is better; but that a man ſhould have reſt in a painful life is beſt of all. Whether a man walk out in the fields and ſay his prayers, and feel God's preſence, or whether he be in the church and feel God's preſence, does he perceive Him any the better becauſe he is in a place of reſt? If he do, it comes from his own infirmity; the difference is not on God's ſide, for God is in all things and places alike, and is ever alike ready to give Himſelf to us, in ſo far as we are able to receive Him; and he knows God aright who ſees Him in all things.

How the ſoul muſt be like unto the heavens in ſteadfaſtneſs and pureneſs.

St. Bernard ſays: "Why does my eye perceive the "heavens, and not my feet? Becauſe my eye is "more like the heavens than my feet." Thus, if my ſoul is to perceive God, it muſt be heavenly. Now what will bring the ſoul to ſee God in herſelf, and know how nigh God is to her? Conſider! The heavens cannot take any imprint from other things, neither can they, by any violence or force, be turned from their order. In like manner, the ſoul that would know God muſt be ſo grounded and built up in Him, that neither hope, nor fear, nor joy, nor ſor-

row, nor weal or woe, nor anything elſe, can ſo move it as to force it from its place in Him.

The heavens are everywhere alike far from the earth: thus ſhall the ſoul be alike far from all earthly things, that ſhe be not nearer to one than to another, but keep herſelf alike far from all, in joy and ſorrow, in proſperity and adverſity, for ſhe muſt be utterly dead to all that is of the earth, earthly, and altogether raiſed above it.

The heavens are pure and bright, without a ſpeck; they have nought to do with time or ſpace; no bodies have a fixed place therein; neither are the heavens ſubject to time: their circuit is ſwift beyond belief; their courſe is without time, yet from their courſe cometh time.

What is needful for the ſoul to perceive and know God.

Nothing hinders the ſoul ſo much in its knowledge of God as time and place. Time and place are parts, and God is one; therefore, if our ſoul is to know God, it muſt know Him above time and place, for God is neither this nor that, like theſe complex things around us, for God is one.

If the ſoul is to ſee, ſhe muſt not look at the things that exiſt in time, for ſo long as ſhe is looking at time and place, or at the phenomena dependent thereon, ſhe can never perceive God Himſelf: juſt as, if mine eye is to perceive colour, it muſt firſt be cleared of all tint in itſelf. If the ſoul is to know God, ſhe muſt have no fellowſhip with that which is Nought. He who ſees God, knows that all creatures are nought; for when you compare one creature with another, it indeed appears beautiful and is ſomewhat, but when you compare it with God it is nothing. I ſay more:

if the ſoul is to know God, ſhe muſt forget herſelf and loſe herſelf, for while ſhe is looking at and thinking about herſelf, ſhe is not looking at or thinking about God; but when ſhe loſes herſelf in God, and lets go of all things, then ſhe finds herſelf again in God. When ſhe comes to know God, then does ſhe know to perfection in Him, both herſelf and all the things from which ſhe has ſeparated herſelf. If I am truly to know the Higheſt Good, or the Eternal Goodneſs, I muſt know it in that wherein it is good, namely, in itſelf,—not in thoſe things in which it is only in part. If I am to know real Being, I muſt know it in that where it is ſelf-exiſtent, that is, in God. In God alone is the true Divine Subſtance: in one man you have not all humanity, for one man is not all men; but in God the ſoul knows all humanity, and all things in their Ideal, for ſhe knows them in their Subſtance. When a man has been within a beautifully-painted houſe, he knows much more about it than another who has never been inſide it, and is able to tell much about it. So I am as certain as that I live and God lives, that if the ſoul is to know God, ſhe muſt know Him above time and ſpace; and ſuch a ſoul knows God, and knows how nigh God's kingdom is; that is, God with all His riches.

How in God the ſoul knows all things in their Ideal.

The Maſters have ſet forth many queſtions in the Schools as to how it be poſſible for the ſoul to know God. It is not of God's ſeverity that He requires much from man; it is of His great kindneſs that He will have the ſoul to open herſelf wider, to be able to receive much, that He may beſtow much upon her. Let no one think that it is hard to attain thereunto.

The ſweetneſs of a life in union with God.

Although it ſound hard, and is hard at firſt, as touching the forſaking and dying to all things, yet, when one has reached this ſtate, no life can be eaſier or ſweeter, or fuller of pleaſures; for God is right diligent to be with us at all ſeaſons, and to teach us, that He may bring us to Himſelf when we are like to go aſtray. None of us ever deſired anything more ardently than God deſires to bring men to the knowledge of Himſelf.

God is ever ready, but we are very unready; God is nigh to us, but we are far from Him; God is within, we are without; God is at home, we are ſtrangers. The Prophet ſays: "God leadeth the "righteous by a narrow path into a broad highway, till "they come unto a wide and open place:"* that is, unto the true freedom of that ſpirit which hath become one ſpirit with God. God help us all to follow Him, that He may bring us unto Himſelf! Amen.

* The Tranſlator has not been able to determine what is the paſſage referred to in the original, which runs thus: *Gott führet die Gerechten durch einen engen Weg in die breite Straſze, daſz ſie kommen in die Weite und in die Breite.*

III.

Sermon for the Third Sunday in Advent.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

How that we muſt wholly come out from ourſelves, that we may go into the wilderneſs and behold God.

MATT. xi. 7.—"What went ye out into the wilderneſs for to ſee?"

OUR Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſaid unto the Jews, "What went ye out into the wilderneſs for "to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind?" In theſe words let us conſider three things: Firſt, the going out; ſecondly, the wilderneſs; thirdly, what we are to ſee there.

Firſt, in what wiſe we are to come out from the world.

Firſt, let us conſider the going out. This bleſſed going out takes place in four ways:—

The firſt way is to come out from the world, that is, from the craving after worldly advantages, and to deſpiſe them, according to that precept of St. John, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the "world. If any man love the world, the love of the "Father is not in him." Thoſe who thus forſake the love of the world, may be fitly ſaid to come out of Egypt, leaving King Pharaoh behind; that is, they purpoſe to forſake pride, vain-glory, preſumption, and all other ſins. And thoſe who are thus minded do greatly need a Moſes to be their leader and commander; for he was very gentle and merciful, and in

1 John ii. 15.

their coming out they require to be treated with great gentleneſs, and kindneſs, and forbearance. But ſuch as come out from Sodom and Gomorrah, that is, thoſe who have to depart from covetouſneſs, intemperance, and unchaſtity, and are hard beſet by theſe foes, do need an angel for their leader and guide; that is to ſay, a man who can have compaſſion on them, but who is himſelf temperate, pure, and ſtrict in life. Now thoſe who do thus ſuffer themſelves to be led and guided, ſhall be verily delivered from all their pride and ſenſuality, as Iſaiah ſays: "Ye ſhall go out with "joy, and be led forth with peace;" and as Chriſt alſo ſays: "In the world ye ſhall have tribulation, but "in me ye ſhall have peace."

Is. lv. 12.

John xvi. 33.

Secondly, how we are to come out from our own wiſhes and feelings, and reſign events to God.

The ſecond kind of coming out is to looſe thy hold on outward things, to ceaſe from thy vain anxieties, thy ſelfiſh wiſhing and planning, and to turn thy thoughts inward, that thou mayeſt learn to know thyſelf, and to ſee what thou art, how thou art, and in what it ſtandeth amiſs with thee. He who is too full of his own joys or ſorrows to get beyond himſelf can never come to know himſelf. So St. Bernard ſays: "It were better to know thyſelf, and to ſee "how ſick and full of infirmities thou art, than to be "maſter of all the ſciences in the world." Therefore ſays Solomon in his Song: "If thou know not [thy-"ſelf], O thou faireſt among women, go thy way "forth by the footſteps of the flock [of thy com-"panions]:" which ſignifies, conſider the lives of God's ſaints, and look at thyſelf in that mirror; that is to ſay, follow their example, and walk not after thine own will.

The third kind of going out is to give up thine own eaſe and thine own way, and to devote thyſelf, ſo far as thou art able, to thy neighbour, to help him by counſel and deed, and by thine own good example, to the utmoſt of thy power and the beſt of thy knowledge, in a conſtant ſpirit of hearty love, that he may be brought to the things that make for his eternal peace. For this is the commandment of the Lord, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you. By "this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if "ye have love one to another." So likewiſe St. Paul ſays: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil "the law of Chriſt." Juſt as it is ſaid in the Book of Geneſis: "Except ye bring your youngeſt brother "with you, ye ſhall ſee my face no more." This is alſo plainly meant in the Book of Canticles, where we read, "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the "field; let us get up early to the vineyards, and let "us lodge in the villages, and let us ſee if the vine "flouriſh."

Thirdly, how we are to give up eaſe, and live for others.

John xiii. 34, 35.

Gal. vi. 2.

Gen. xliv. 23.

Cant. vii. 11, 12.

The fourth kind of going out is to forſake everything but God, ſo that our love towards God ſhould be the ſtrongeſt love we have; and we ſhould indeed love Him with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength. As it was ſaid unto Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from "thy kindred, and from thy father's houſe:" that is to ſay, "Set not your affections on the things that "periſh, but on God only; and whatever you poſſeſs, "thank God for it, and uſe it for Him." Thus had the woman of Canaan come out, as her words indeed teſtify: "True, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs

Fourthly, how we are to love God and not ourſelves.

Gen. xii. 1.

"that fall from their maſter's table;" and therefore ſhe obtained her requeſt. Thus it is ſaid to the loving ſoul and her companions: "Go forth, O ye "daughters of Zion." Well may it be ſaid "ye "daughters," and not ſons; for they are ſtill feeble in underſtanding, and troubled with many womaniſh fears, and not yet ſtrong in renunciation, but are ſtill tender and weak, like maidens or daughters.

The wilderneſs a type of a ſpiritual life.

The ſecond ſubject for our conſideration is "the wil-"derneſs." When men have forſaken ſins and worldly ambition, they come into the wilderneſs, which ſignifies a ſpiritual life, or the life of one who is dead to the world. Now there are two kinds of wilderneſs, a good and a bad. It is an evil wilderneſs when a man's heart is filled with vanity, and barren of good deeds, of love and of heavenly aſpiration, and far and wide in the Church, or in the temple of the ſoul, there riſes no incenſe of praiſe to God; when the ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael, that is to ſay all good thoughts, are ſcattered, each to his own way. But that is a wilderneſs which is very fruitful and good, when the whirlwinds of earthly cares or paſſions are laid to reſt, and the billows of worldly deſire and creature aims ceaſe to ſwell up in the depths of the heart. And then, even though the firſt ſharp dart of pain pierce through every nerve of body and mind, yet in the deep ſources of his will, the man remains undaunted. That is a good wilderneſs when without there are ſtorms, yet within there is peace; the wilderneſs of which God ſaid by the prophet: "I will "bring you into the wilderneſs, and there will I plead "with you face to face;" for no one does hear or

An evil wilderneſs.

A good wilderneſs.

Ez. xx. 35.

underſtand what is in him, and what God ſays in his ſoul, until he is brought into this wilderneſs.

There are three reaſons why a ſpiritual life is called a wilderneſs, or a life in the deſert. The firſt is on account of the ſmall number who do turn from the world and go forth into it, and becauſe the common way of the world is for each man to follow his own earthly objects. But it is the wiſeſt courſe to drive out the world from the heart, by baniſhing the very thoughts and images thereof, and, with Moſes, go into the depths of the wilderneſs and dwell therein, that ſo we may the better watch over and guard our ſheep; that is to ſay, eſcape the aſſaults of inward temptation, and the wanderings of the imagination into forbidden fields. And as, when Moſes drove his ſheep into the fartheſt corners of the wilderneſs, God revealed Himſelf to him there in a burning buſh, ſo likewiſe ſhalt thou be filled with burning love and holy longing, and follow on to know God.

How to go out into this good wilderneſs.

This is the beauteous wilderneſs of which Solomon ſpeaks when he ſays: "Who is this that cometh up "out of the wilderneſs like a pillar of ſmoke, per- "fumed with myrrh and frankincenſe?" St. Gregory ſays: "It is the nature and property of love to riſe up "unceaſingly from itſelf to God with holy aſpiration, "never reſting till it hath reached and embraced the "Higheſt Good; for nothing on earth can draw it "down or impriſon its flame, but it ſoars ever up- "wards to God above itſelf." And ſo it is with good men; and the cloſer they cling to Him whom they love, the more do they turn from and deſpiſe all the ſmiles of the world. They cleave with ſteadfaſt deſire

Cant. iii. 6.

Job vi. 9,10. unto God, as Job ſays: "Even that it would pleaſe "God to deſtroy me; that he would let looſe his "hand, and cut me off! Then ſhould I yet have "comfort." Of this wilderneſs ſay the angels: *Cant. viii.* 5. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderneſs, "leaning upon her beloved?" and the loving ſoul anſwers: "I have found him whom my ſoul loveth, I "have laid hold on him and will not let him go." *Of the bleſſedneſs of this wilderneſs.* For thoſe who come into this wilderneſs are able to taſte and tell of ſecret and inward matters. Moreover, in the exerciſe of love all virtues do ſpring up and grow. So Chriſt, on Mount Tabor, took to Himſelf all His glory, for an image to us of that fruit of the wilderneſs which ſhall be ours alſo if we give ourſelves *2 Cor. iii.* 18. unto God. For St. Paul ſays: "But we all with open "face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, "are changed into the ſame image from glory to "glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Again, a ſpiritual life may be fitly called a wilderneſs, by reaſon of the many ſweet flowers which ſpring up and flouriſh where they are not trodden under foot by man. In this reſpect the life of one dead to the world may well be likened to a wilderneſs, ſeeing that ſo many virtues may be learned by continual and earneſt ſtriving; but becauſe the effort needed is toilſome and painful at the firſt, few are *Of the flowers that do grow in this wilderneſs.* willing to make it. In this wilderneſs are found the lilies of chaſtity, and the white roſes of innocence; and therein are found too the red roſes of ſacrifice, when fleſh and blood are conſumed in the ſtruggle with ſin, and the man is ready, if need be, to ſuffer martyrdom,—the which is not eaſily to be learned in

the world. In this wilderneſs, too, are found the violets of humility, and many other fair flowers and wholeſome roots, in the examples of holy men of God. And in this wilderneſs ſhalt thou chooſe for thyſelf a pleaſant ſpot wherein to dwell; that is, a holy life, in which thou mayeſt follow the example of God's ſaints in pureneſs of heart, poverty of ſpirit, true obedience, and all other virtues; ſo that it may be ſaid, as it is in the Canticles: "Many flowers have appeared in our "land;" for many have died full of holineſs and good works.

A third likeneſs between a ſpiritual life and the wilderneſs is that we find in the wilderneſs ſo little proviſion for the fleſh, and therefore the lovers of this world cannot live there. Thus did the children of Iſrael complain againſt Moſes becauſe they lacked many things. By this we are to underſtand a life of moderation, girding up the loins with manly vigour. And every man is bound to lead ſuch a life; for had he the whole world wherewith to ſupply his wants, he would ſtill be bound ſcrupulouſly to take no more than ſufficient for his real neceſſities. Moreover by ſuch a life all the powers of the ſoul are braced up. And although there is little to delight the ſenſes in this wilderneſs, there is much of the comfort of the ſpirit, which far excels the pleaſures of the world. Iſaiah ſays: "For the Lord ſhall comfort Zion; he will "comfort all her waſte places; and he will make her "wilderneſs like Eden, and her deſert like the garden "of the Lord." And again: "I will make the wil- "derneſs a pool of water, and the dry land ſprings of "water." Thus the ſolitary ſoul bears many more

The ſoul is ſtrengthene by a life in this wilder-neſs.

Is. li. 3.

Is. xli. 18.

children of good works than ſhe that is married to the world. So Pharaoh was commanded by God to let His people go forth into the deſert, that they might ſacrifice unto the Lord, and receive ſpiritual manna inſtead of the carnal pleaſures of Egypt.

What we are to ſee in the wilderneſs.

The third thing for our conſideration is what we are to ſee in the wilderneſs. When a man has gone out into the wilderneſs, he is bidden to look with his inward eye upon "the king and his bride," which is the ſoul, with all her hidden treaſures of lovelineſs.

Is. ix. 6.

It is written, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, "and behold the king;" that is, Solomon, who is a type of Chriſt, of whom Iſaiah ſays: "To us a "child is born, unto us a ſon is given: and the "government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder; and his "name ſhall be called Wonderful." And now behold how wonderful God is in His deity, that He has become man for the ſake of His bride This is

Exod. iii. 3.

the miracle that Moſes ſaw, and ſaid: "I will now "turn aſide and ſee this great ſight, why the buſh is "not burnt." The thorn-buſh is Chriſt's human

The burning buſh a type of Chriſt.

nature; the flame is His ſoul filled with burning love; the light is His deity ſhining through His mortal body. Now, conſider this Chriſt and Solomon, upon whom is poured out without meaſure that wisdom which comprehends all things in its graſp: He is the Truth who hath taught us the way to heaven; let the ſoul look upon Him, that ſhe may follow Him, to live after His ſpirit, and not after her own inclination, and her nature ſhall be greatly ſtrengthened to fight the good fight when ſhe conſiders the nature of her King, how He fulfilled His pilgrimage. For it ſhall greatly

refreſh the loving ſoul to remember from time to time His human infirmities, and from time to time to rejoice in His life in the ſpirit.

The Chriſtian's experience.

A maſter has ſaid: "Excess in pleaſures enfeebles "the powers, and overflowing ſpiritual emotions con- "ſume the ſpirit. Great joy cannot laſt always, but "while here we have need of variableneſs in our "joys; for it is not yet given to the ſoul to ſerve "God in the holy of holies." Therefore ſhall the ſoul ſometimes contemplate the divine greatneſs of Chriſt, and ſometimes His holy humanity. A ſoul that is as yet inexperienced and ſtrange in the things of God ſhall be bidden to believe in God; but a fervent, tried, and experienced ſoul ſhall be invited to behold the King in his beauty. And hence the loving ſoul ſhall ſee with her inward eye in what wiſe ſhe ought to yield to or withſtand her fellow-chriſtians of mankind.

The Chriſtian's aſpiration.

St. Bernard ſays: "O Lord, "come quickly and reign on Thy throne, for now oft- "times ſomething riſes up within me, and tries to take "poſſeſſion of Thy throne; pride, covetouſneſs, un- "cleanneſs, and ſloth want to be my kings; and then "evil-ſpeaking, anger, hatred, and the whole train of "vices join with me in warring againſt myſelf, and "try to reign over me. I reſiſt them, I cry out "againſt them, and ſay, 'I have no other king than "'Chriſt.' O King of Peace, come and reign in me, "for I will have no king but thee!" And Gilbert ſays: "O Lord, I endure thy hand upon me, and "preſs forward with ſtraining eyes, with knocking, "with prayers, and through many heights and depths "of joy and ſorrow." But O, who can faint and

grow weary in making himſelf ready for ſuch a king, when he remembers how God has made our little nature able to receive His divine Subſtance, and has even taken upon Himſelf our nature, and inveſted Himſelf with the colours of our humanity, and ſo revealed His beauty unto us, and loveth us much more than we love Him! I were in truth worthy of all condemnation, if I did not love Him above all things, when He aſketh nothing from me but to love Him!

Therefore let us in the firſt place come out wholly from ourſelves, that we may, in the next place, enter into this bleſſed wilderneſs, and, in the third place, deſire to know and behold the true King and bridegroom of the ſoul. And to this end the Moſes of a holy Will muſt lead us into the Mount of God. But the people whom Moſes led up out of Egypt are an image of thoſe who, having newly laid aſide their evil cuſtoms, do eaſily return to their old ways, and make to themſelves in the wilderneſs a golden calf of their old fleſhly luſts, of unchaſte or worldly thoughts, to live after the flesh, and ſerve their own bellies and not God, but have their delight in the creature. And hence we have need of the true Moſes, even Chriſt Jeſus, that He may at all times guide us and lead us, and draw us to Himſelf, ſo that we may go out after Him into the wilderneſs of our own hearts, wherein God lies hidden to us. May God help us all to attain thereunto! Amen!

IV.

Sermon for Christmas Day.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

Of the things by which we become children of God. *

JOHN i. 12.—"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the ſons of God."



HIS day, dear children, hath God wrought a great wonder, and manifeſted the greatneſs of His love towards us, in that He hath looked down upon us, who were His enemies, aliens and afar off from Him, with ſuch mercy as to give us power to become His ſons and children; therefore it behoves us not to ſhow ourſelves unthankful for ſuch kindneſs, but to put on the true marks and qualities of the elect, beloved children of God. And hereby ye may know what theſe are.

How God hath made us His children.

He who would be a ſon of our Father in Heaven muſt be a ſtranger among the children of this world, and ſeparate himſelf from them, and muſt have an earneſt mind and a ſingle eye, with a heart inclined towards God. Now ſuch a one is made a ſon of God when he is born again in God, and this takes place with every freſh revelation of God to his ſoul. A

The marks of God's children.

A heart fixed upon God.

* It has been conjectured that this ſermon is by Eckhart, junior; but it cannot be decidedly aſcertained whether it is by him or Tauler.

man is born of the Spirit when he ſuffers God's work to be wrought in his ſoul; yet it is not this which makes the ſoul to be perfectly bleſſed, but that revelation, of which we have ſpoken already, makes the ſoul to follow after Him who has revealed Himſelf to her, and in whom ſhe is born anew, with love and praiſe. Thus ſhe returns again to her firſt ſource, and is made, of God's grace, a child of God, united to Him in rightful love. And let him who would attain hereunto, copy Chriſt in his human nature, and God Himſelf will verily come unto him in His ſuperhuman Godhead.

Self-renunciation.

The beloved children of God renounce themſelves; and hence they do right without effort, and mount up to the higheſt point of goodneſs; while he who will not let go of himſelf, but does right by labour and toil, will never reach the higheſt that he might. In other words; he whoſe works proceed from himſelf, does little good ſervice to God; while he who ſuffers himſelf to be guided by the Holy Spirit, does great works even in ſmall actions. But he who will attain to this muſt beware of men, ſo far as is conſiſtent with reaſon. A heathen teacher has declared: "I never "mingled with men, but I came home leſs of a man "than I went out." Men who live on the outſide of things are a great hindrance in the way of goodneſs by their many idle words. Therefore thoſe who wiſh to foſter the inner life of their ſouls, are in great danger of receiving hurt from things which are ſaid without thought, eſpecially when many are together. He who repents what he has ſaid as ſoon as the words are out of his mouth, is one of theſe careleſs ſpeakers.

He only is a good ſon who has caſt off his old ſins and evil habits; for without this it is impoſſible that he ſhould be created anew in Chriſt Jeſus. It is not until the thoughts can find reſt in nothing but God, that the man is drawn cloſe to God Himſelf, and becomes His. He is happy who is always in the full uſe of his collective powers; and this is the case when God is preſent to his ſpirit, and he gladly obeys all the motions of God's Spirit, and gives his whole diligence to act and live agreeable thereunto. He hath a right ſpirit who is free from all craving after temporal things, and like a good ſon is united by love to his God, without any earthly deſires.

The caſting off of evil habits.

The child of God ſhould ſo order his life as always to promote his own ſteadfaſtneſs in virtue. When a man always keeps his body in due ſubjection, it is an outward pledge of the ſtrength of his virtuous intents. Then is God in the man, when there is nothing in him which is contrary to the will of God. For God makes a man's body the temple of the Holy Ghoſt when He finds nothing in the man which grieves His Spirit, but He reigns with Jeſus Chriſt over the body. That is to ſay: when a man knows of nothing in himſelf which is diſpleaſing to God, then God dwells in him, and he is ſet free from the things that periſh. He who moſt hates and comes out from himſelf has the greateſt ſhare in God, and poſſeſſes his earthly heritage in peace.

A virtuous, well-ordered life.

Maſter Eckhart ſays: "That which kindles the "warmeſt devotion in a man's heart, and knits him "moſt cloſely to God, is the greateſt benefit he can "receive in this preſent time; and hence the greateſt

" good work a man can do, is to draw other men to " God, ſo that they enter into a union with Him. " And this is the beſt work of love to our neighbour " while we are in this world."

Humility and ſelf-knowledge.

Further: it is a mark of the children of God that they ſee their own little faults and ſhortcomings to be great ſins. Now he who entangles himſelf with a multitude of matters, outward or inward, and will meddle with every thing that is going forward, will alſo have a ſhare in the evil thereof. We muſt let all things be to us merely the ſupply of our wants, and poſſeſs them in their nothingneſs. The great work and aim of the beloved children of God is to ſhun all ſin, deadly or trifling, that they may not grieve God's Spirit; for they know, as St. Auguſtine ſays, that for the ſmalleſt habitual ſin which is not puniſhed and laid aſide in this preſent life, they will have to ſuffer more than all the pains of this world. Hence Anſelm ſays, that he would rather die, and that this world ſhould be deſtroyed, than commit one ſin a day knowingly. And Auguſtine ſays: " The ſoul " is created eternal, and therefore ſhe cannot reſt but " in God." And again: " He who prays for anything " except for God's ſake, does not aſk aright, and will " not be anſwered with a bleſſing."

Good works.

Again: the child of God muſt have exerciſe in good works; but when he comes to poſſeſs the very ſubſtance of virtue, then virtue is no longer an exerciſe to him; for he practiſes it without an effort, and when virtue is practised without labour or pain, we have got beyond exerciſes. But none may get ſo far before body and ſoul are separated from each

other; unleſs, indeed, the ſoul were drawn out of herſelf, and it were poſſible in this preſent ſtate for God to dwell in the ſoul, acting and ſuffering. [Ah, Lord, did we all we ſhould, God would do to us all we would. If any wiſh to become ſuch that God can love him, and look upon him with complacency, let him forſake all that he loves in the world, and love nothing but God alone. He who deſires to receive with the Son of God a man's reward, muſt ſuffer from and with the wicked of this world; and if he hunger after his ſalvation as one who is periſhing for lack of food, it will avail him nothing, until he caſt off ſin and work the works of righteouſneſs which are befitting [a child of] grace, and endure all wrong and injuſtice patiently for God's ſake. For without this, his hunger and thirſt after ſalvation can neither be ſatisfied here nor hereafter. For it is of the very eſſence of ſalvation to love God, to depart from ſin, and to work righteouſneſs;] not to be able to find happineſs in all the pleaſures of earth, but to be willing to ſuffer willingly all manner of pain and contradiction, and not ſeek to avoid them: when a man has come to this ſtate all is well with him, and not otherwiſe. And whatever ſuch a child of God beholds, it works for his good. If he ſees ſin, he thanks God for having kept him from it, and prays for the converſion of the ſinners; if he ſees goodneſs, he deſires to fulfil it in his own practice. We ought always to keep two ends in view,—to put away from us all that is hurtful, and to put on all that is yet lacking to us of good works.

He who would reign with Chriſt muſt have His ſympathy with ſinners,

His purity, and His readineſs to ſuffer;

and for ſuch an one, all things work together for good.

But thoſe who vainly think to be made God's

Thoſe who

make much of outward obſervances, while not amending their faults, are not God's children, but the Devil's.

children by their much watching, and faſting, and labour, by keeping ſilence, by ſinging hymns, by wearing bad and inconvenient clothing, or again by great deeds and pious works, while they do not dive into the bottom of their hearts, and spy out all their ſecret inclinations, to leſſer as well as to greater faults; ſuch as an inclination to think too well of themſelves and too ill of their neighbours, or to harſhneſs, to treſpaſs on the rights of others, to moroſeneſs, to a bitter ſpirit, to contradiction, to obſtinacy, to caprice, and the like, and do not perceive theſe things in themſelves, nor wiſh to learn how to get rid of their old bad diſpoſitions nor yet of their outward bad habits, ſuch as evil speaking, lightneſs of manners, unkind ridicule of others, and refuſe to give ear to thoſe who teach and exhort them to what is right, or to probe their own motives;—theſe are all the children of the Devil. Alas! how many are martyrs for the Devil! To ſuch as theſe Iſaiah ſays: "Bring no "more vain oblations: cease to do evil; learn to do "well; waſh you, make you clean." Yea, if a man were to ſuffer himſelf to be torn to pieces, and did not learn to cleanſe himſelf thoroughly from his ſins, to behave towards his fellow-creatures in a ſpirit of generous love, and to love God above all things, it would all be uſeleſs and in vain.

Is. i. 13. 16, 17.

The joys of true converſion.

Dionyſius ſays: "To be converted to the truth "means nothing elſe but a turning from the love of "created things, and a coming into union with the "uncreated Higheſt Good. And in one who is thus "converted there is a joy beyond conception, and his "underſtanding is unclouded and unperverted by the

"love of earthly things, and is mirrored in his con-
"ſcience, in the mirror of God's mind. . Love is the
"nobleſt of all virtues, for it makes man divine,
"and makes God man." And again: "Cleanſe your
"hearts and make yourſelves at one with God, for
"one glimpſe of Him brings the ſoul cloſer to Him
"than all the outward works of all Chriſtendom.
"He who wiſhes to attain to this union muſt get be-
"yond all that may be conquered and grasped by the
"underſtanding, for God hath nothing ſo hidden that
"it cannot be revealed unto the ſoul. O that ſhe
"were but wiſe enough to ſeek after it with all
"earneſtneſs!"

A certain teacher has ſaid, that if a man will give his heart and life to God, God will give him in return greater gifts than if he were to ſuffer death over again for him.

He who is willing to be abaſed for God's ſake, ſhall attain the higheſt glory and work the greateſt works.

Now that man ſhall attain unto the Higheſt Good who is ready to deſcend into the loweſt depths of poverty. And this comes to paſs when he is caſt into utter wretchedneſs, and forſaken of all creatures and all comfort. And let him aſk help of none; let him be as knowing nothing, and as though he had never been aught but a fool; let him have none to take compaſſion on him, even ſo much as to give him a cup of cold water to drink; yet let him never forget God in his heart, and never ſhrink from God's ſearching eye of judgment, though he knows not what its verdict will be; but with a cheerful and thankful ſpirit yield himſelf up to ſuffer whatever God ſhall appoint unto him, and to fulfil according to his power, by the grace of God, all His holy will to the utmoſt

that he can diſcern it, and never complain of his diſtreſſes but to God alone with entire and humble reſignation, praying that he may be ſtrong to endure all his ſufferings according to the will of God:—Ah, dear children, what glorious ſons of God would ſuch men be! what wonders would God work through them to the magnifying of His glory! Theſe are the true and righteous men who truſt in God, and cleave to Him in ſpirit and in truth! That we may thus become His ſons, may God help us by His grace! Amen.



V.

Sermon for Epiphany.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

This Sermon on the Goſpel for the day, from St. Matthew, ſhoweth how God, of His great faithfulneſs, hath foreſeen and ordained all ſufferings for the eternal good of each man, in whatever wiſe they befall us, and whether they be great or ſmall.

MATT. ii. 11.—"And they preſented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincenſe, and myrrh."

NOW conſider firſt the myrrh. It is bitter; and this is a type of the bitterneſs which muſt be taſted before a man can find God, when he firſt turns from the world to God, and all his likings and deſires have to be utterly changed. For it is neceſſary that all which a man has hitherto taken pleaſure in poſſeſſing ſhould be given up, and this is at firſt very bitter and very hard work to him. All things muſt become as bitter to thee as their enjoyment was ſweet unto thee. But to this work thou haſt need of a full purpoſe of heart and never-failing diligence. For the greater thy delight in anything has been, the more bitter will it be to give it up, yea the very gall of bitterneſs.

Of the bitterneſs of turning from earthly delights.

Now, it may be aſked, "How can a man be without appetites and enjoyment ſo long as he is in this preſent ſtate? I am hungry, and I eat; I am thirſty, I drink; I am weary, I ſleep; I am cold, I

The ſatisfaction of natural deſires not ſinful,

"warm myſelf; and I cannot poſſibly find that to be "bitter nor barren of natural enjoyment which is the "ſatisfaction of my natural deſires. This I cannot "alter, ſo long as nature is nature." True: but this pleaſure, eaſe, ſatisfaction, enjoyment, or delight, muſt not penetrate into the depths of thy heart, nor make up a portion of thy inner life. It muſt paſs away with the things that cauſed it, and have no abiding place in thee. We muſt not ſet our affections thereon, but allow it to come and go, and not repoſe upon the ſenſe of poſſeſſion with content or delight in the world or the creature. We muſt mortify and ſubdue nature with nature and the love thereof within us, yea, even the delight that we have in the children of God and good men. Theſe and all other inclinations muſt be brought under dominion to a higher power; for till this is accompliſhed, Herod and his ſervants, which ſeek after the young child's life, are not altogether and of a ſurety dead within thee. Therefore beware that thou do not deceive thyſelf, but look narrowly to it, how it ſtands with thee, and do not be too ſecure, nor live without fear.

but it muſt be ſubordinated to higher aims.

How to take the bitter myrrh of outward trouble.

But there is yet another myrrh, which far ſurpaſſes the firſt. This is the myrrh which God gives us in the cup of trouble and ſorrow, of whatever kind it may be, outward or inward. Ah, if thou couldſt but receive this myrrh as from its true ſource, and drink it with the ſame love with which God puts it to thy lips, what bleſſedneſs would it work in thee! Ah, what a joy and peace and an excellent thing were that! Yes, the very leaſt and the very greateſt ſorrows that God ever ſuffers to befall thee, proceed

from the depths of His unſpeakable love; and ſuch great love were better for thee than the higheſt and beſt gifts beſides that He has given thee or ever could give thee, if thou couldſt but ſee it in this light; yea, however ſmall a ſuffering light on thee, God—who, as our Lord ſays, counts the ſmalleſt hair that ever fell from thy head, without thy knowing it—God has foreſeen it from eternity, and choſen, and purpoſed, and appointed that it ſhould befall thee. So that if your little finger only aches, if you are cold, if you are hungry or thirſty, if others vex you by their words or deeds, or whatever happens to you that cauſes you diſtreſs or pain, it will all help to fit you for a noble and bleſſed ſtate; and it has been foreſeen and foreappointed by God that ſuch and ſuch things ſhould happen and come upon you; for all is meaſured, weighed, and numbered, and cannot be leſs nor otherwiſe than it is. That my eyes are now in my head, is as God our Heavenly Father has ſeen it from eternity; now let them be put out, and let me become blind, or deaf, this alſo has our Heavenly Father foreſeen from eternity, that it ought to come to paſs, and had His eternal counſel with reſpect unto it, and determined it from eternity within Himſelf. Ought I not, then, to open my inward eyes and ears, and thank my God that His eternal counſel is fulfilled in me? Ought I to grieve at it? I ought to be wonderfully thankful for it! And ſo alſo with loſs of friends, or property, or reputation, or comfort, or whatever it be that God allots to us, it will all ſerve to prepare thee, and help thee forward to true peace, if thou canſt only take it ſo. Now, ſometimes people

All our ſorrows, ſmall as well as great, appointed by God.

have ſaid to me: "Maſter, it is ill with me: I have "much ſuffering and tribulation;" and when I have anſwered: "It is all as it ſhould be," they have ſaid, "No, Maſter, I have deſerved it; I have cheriſhed an "evil thing in my heart." Then take blame to thyſelf; but whether thy pain be deſerved or not, believe that it comes from God, and thank Him, and bear it, and reſign thyſelf to it.

All ſuffering ſent for a means of our progreſs to higher things.

All the myrrhs of bitterneſs that God gives, are ordered aright, that He may by this means raiſe men to true greatneſs. It is for the wholeſome exerciſe of ſuffering that He has ſet the forces of nature as it were at war with man. He could juſt as well and as eaſily have cauſed bread to grow as corn, but that it is neceſſary for man to have his powers exerciſed in every way. And He has beſtowed as much care and thought in the arrangement of each ſingle thing, as the artiſt does when he is painting a picture, who never draws a ſingle ſtroke with his pencil without conſidering how long, how ſhort, and how broad it ought to be; and it muſt be ſo and no otherwiſe, if the picture is to be a perfect maſter-piece, and all its bright red and blue colours are to come out. But God takes a thouſand times more pains with us than the artiſt with his picture, by many touches of ſorrow, and by many colours of circumſtance, to bring man into the form which is the higheſt and nobleſt in His ſight, if only we received His gifts and myrrh in the right ſpirit.

Of ſelf-created ſuffering.

There are ſome, however, who are not content with the myrrh that God gives them, but think fit to give themſelves ſome, and create evils for themſelves and ſick fancies, and have indeed ſuffered long and much,

for they take hold of all things by the wrong end. And they gain little grace from all their pain, becauſe they are building upon ſtones of their own laying, whether it be penances or abſtinence, or prayer or meditation. According to them, God muſt wait their leiſure, and let them do their part firſt, elſe no good will come of the work. God hath fixed it in His purpoſe that He will reward nothing but His own works. In the kingdom of Heaven He will crown nothing to all eternity but His works, and not thine. What He has not wrought in thee, He takes no account of.

Of the bitter myrrh of inward trials.

In the third place, there is an exceeding bitter myrrh which God gives; namely, inward aſſaults and inward darkneſs. When a man is willing to taſte this myrrh, and does not put it from him, it wears down fleſh and blood, yea, the whole nature; for theſe inward exerciſes make the cheek grow pale far ſooner than great outward hardſhips, for God appoints unto his ſervants cruel fightings and ſtrange dread, and unheard of diſtreſſes, which none can underſtand but he who has felt them. And theſe men are beſet with ſuch a variety of difficulties, ſo many cups of bitterneſs are preſented to them, that they hardly know which way to turn, or what they ought to do; but God knows right well what He is about. But when the cup is put away, and theſe feelings are ſtifled or unheeded, a greater injury is done to the ſoul than can ever be amended. For no heart can conceive in what ſurpaſſing love God giveth us this myrrh; yet this which we ought to receive to our ſoul's good, we ſuffer to paſs by us in our ſleepy indifference, and nothing comes of it. Then we come and complain: "Alas,

"Lord! I am ſo dry, and it is ſo dark within me!" I tell you, dear child, open thy heart to the pain, and it will do thee more good than if thou wert full of feeling and devoutneſs.

Of two wrong ways of receiving this myrrh.

Now men receive this bitter myrrh in two ways; they try to meet it as with their practical ſenſe or with their intellectual ſubtilty. When it ſprings from outward circumſtances, men wiſh they had known better, and they would have averted it with their wiſdom, and attribute it to outward accidents, to fate, or miſfortune, and think they might have taken ſteps to prevent what has happened, and if they had done ſo, the means would have ſucceeded, and the calamity would have been turned aſide. They would fain be too wiſe for God, and teach Him, and maſter Him, and cannot take things from His hand. The ſufferings of ſuch are very ſore, and their myrrh is exceeding bitter.

There are others, who having taſted the cup of that bitterneſs which ſprings from within, do ſtart back and forthwith ſeek to break away from it by the exerciſe of their natural wit and ſubtilty, and think to quell the ſtriſe by dint of reaſoning and arguing with themſelves. And this kind of trouble often paſſes away more quickly with ſimple minds than with thoſe whoſe reaſon is more active; for the former follow God more ſimply, they feel they do not know what to do, and ſo they truſt. But if thoſe of higher powers follow God's leading, and ſurrender themſelves wholly to Him, their career is far nobler and more bleſſed, for their reaſon ſerves them in all things more freely and excellently.

Of the

Now from this myrrh ſprings a noble branch, which

beareth coſtly frankincenſe. The frankincenſe gum ſends forth a ſweet-ſmelling ſmoke; ſo when the fire catches the rod, it curls round it and ſeeks to ſet looſe the perfume that is contained therein, that it may go forth and ſpread a fragrant incenſe around. The fire is nothing elſe than burning love to God, which is as it were latent in prayer; and love is the frankincenſe which ſends forth the true fragrance of holy devotion. For, as a writer has ſaid: "Prayer is nothing but the "going up of the ſpirit unto God." And juſt as the ſtraw exiſts for the ſake of the corn, and is good for nothing in itſelf but to make a bed whereon to lie, or to manure the earth, ſo outward prayer is of no profit except in ſo far as it ſtirs up the noble flame of devotion in the heart, and when that ſweet incenſe breaks forth and riſes up, then it matters little whether the prayer of the lips be uttered or not. In ſaying this, I except thoſe perſons who are bound by the ordinances of the Holy Church to offer up prayers, and thoſe who have vowed to perform acts of devotion, or have been adviſed thereunto by their ſpiritual directors.

frankincenſe of love to God that ſpringeth from this myrrh.

May Jeſus Chriſt, the King of Glory, help us to make the right uſe of all the myrrh that God ſends us, and to offer up to Him the true incenſe of devout hearts. Amen!*

* In the later editions here follows an expoſition of the gold, but it is wanting in the four earlieſt editions and the beſt MSS.

VI.

Second Sermon for Epiphany.

Showeth on what wiſe a man ſhall ariſe from himſelf and from all creatures, to the end that God may find the ground of his ſoul prepared, and may begin and perfect His work therein.

ISAIAH lx. 1.—"Ariſe, O Jeruſalem, and be enlightened."*

Of God's loving deſire for our ſalvation.

IN all this world God covets and requires but one thing only, and that He deſires ſo exceeding greatly that He gives His whole might and energy thereto. This one thing is, that He may find that good ground which He has laid in the noble mind of man made fit and ready for Him to exerciſe His divine agency thereon. For God has all power in heaven and on earth, and the only thing that is lacking unto Him is that He is hindered from accompliſhing the moſt glorious of all His works in man.

Of our part in the work.

Now what muſt we do that God may ſhine in on this innermoſt ground of the ſoul, and work there? We muſt ariſe, ſays our text. Ariſe! this ſounds as if we could do ſomething towards this work. We

* According to our authorized verſion: "Ariſe, ſhine; for thy light is "come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee." The German verſion of the text has been retained, becauſe the argument of the Sermon is baſed upon it.

muſt ariſe from all that is not God, from ourſelves and from all creatures. And by this act of ariſing, the ground of the ſoul is ſtirred, and a ſtrong craving ſprings up in it; and the more this deepeſt ground of the ſoul is laid bare, and all that occupied and cumbered it is cleared away, the keener grows this craving after ſomething higher than itſelf, ſo that ofttimes with God's lighteſt touch upon the naked ſoul, the longing pierces through fleſh and blood and marrow.

Of thoſe who try to find peace by the exerciſe of their reaſon.

But there are two ſorts of over-bold men who are driven by this ſtirring up of their ſouls into two raſh courſes. The firſt come with their natural quickneſs of parts, and with the conceptions of their own minds, and try therewith to touch the principle of their ſouls, and ſeek to ſtill the craving within them by hearing and learning of lofty matters. And in this they find great delight, and ween that they are a Jeruſalem,—a city of peace, by the exerciſe of their intellect. There is another claſs who think to prepare the ground of their ſouls for God and to obtain peace by means of ſelf-choſen good works, or by religious exerciſes, ſuch as prayer, meditation, or whatever they ſee other people do for the ſame end; and then they fancy they are verily children of Zion, and their works of piety and charity do yield them great peace, and they delight in nothing ſo much as in religious exerciſes and the fulfilling of the taſks they have ſet themſelves. But that their peace is a falſe one, may be perceived by this, that they do not cure themſelves of their former faults, ſuch as pride, ſenſuality, ſelf-indulgence, love of the

Of thoſe who think to find peace by outward obſervances.

That their peace is falſe is proved by its fruits.

creature, proneneſs to ſuſpect or to judge others; and if any offend them, reſentment forthwith flames up within them, and an angry word eſcapes them, or hatred ſmoulders in their heart; and ſuch like faults they indulge in with their own conſent. By this we may know that they wiſh to manage their ſouls after their own faſhion, and work in them; while God cannot accompliſh His work in ſuch a foul and unſwept chamber. Therefore, their peace is falſe, and they have not yet ariſen in truth. Let not ſuch claim to be children of Zion, nor dare to think they have found true peace; but let them ſeriouſly ſet themſelves to work to conquer their faults, exerciſing themſelves, after the pattern of our Lord, in humility and works of love, dying unto themſelves in all things, and thus learn how to riſe on high.

Of thoſe who do in truth ariſe and are enlightened of God.

But thoſe others, that is to ſay thoſe noble men who do truly ariſe and receive divine light, theſe allow God to prepare their ſouls for Himſelf, and renounce themſelves in all things without any reſerve, either as regards their words or their daily habits, or what they do or refrain from, or anything elſe, whether things go ſmoothly or croſſly with them. Both in framing their purpoſes, and in meeting what ariſes, they refer all to God in humble fear, and give themſelves wholly up to Him, in utter poorneſs of ſpirit, in willing ſelf-ſurrender, acquieſcing in the divine will. They are content to ſay in all matters, "As God will:" in quiet or in diſquiet; for their ſole delight is the holy and excellent will of God. To theſe we may apply what Chriſt ſaid unto His diſciples when they bade Him to go up unto the feaſt: "Go ye up; your

"time is alway ready, but my time is not yet come." Theſe men's time is alway ready for them to endure and ſubmit; all time is fitting for them; but God's time is not alway ready, when He deigns or ſees fit to work, or to ſend forth His light. This they ſubmiſſively leave to His divine will, and are willing to wait as long as He pleaſes.

How ſuch ſuffer God to manage their ſouls for them.

Now the diſtinguiſhing mark of this better ſort of men is that they ſuffer God to order their ſouls' affairs, and do not hinder Him. Yet they are not raiſed above the ſhocks of temptation, nor even the liability to fall for a moment (for no one is entirely delivered from this danger); but afterwards, as ſoon as the firſt onſet of paſſion is over, and their fault is held up before them, whether it be pride, or ſelf-indulgence, or anger, or hatred, or whatever is their ſpecial temptation, they come to God in ſelf-abaſement, and ſubmit themſelves to Him, and bear without murmuring what He ſees fit to appoint unto them. And ſuch do in truth ariſe, for they riſe above themſelves in all things, and they do become in truth a Jeruſalem or ſtronghold of peace, for they have quiet in diſquietude and proſperity in adverſity, and rejoice in the will of God amidſt all circumſtances. Therefore no power in this world can take away their peace, nor could all the devils in hell, nor all the men on earth banded together. All their affections centre in God, and they are enlightened by Him of a truth; for He ſhines into their ſouls with a ſtrong and clear light that reveals all things unto them; and He ſhineth as truly, nay far more brightly, in the blackeſt darkneſs than in the ſeeming light. Ah! theſe are ſweet and

How they have peace amidſt diſquiet, becauſe their ſouls are fixed upon God.

lovely children of God, raiſed above nature by their likeneſs to Him; and ſuch neither undertake nor bring to paſs any of their works without God. Nay, if we may dare to uſe ſuch language, they are, ſo to ſpeak, nothing, but God is in them; as St. Paul ſays: "I live, yet not I but Chriſt liveth in me." Ah! theſe are highly-favoured men; they bear the world upon their ſhoulders and are the noble pillars of ſociety. To make one of their number, what a bleſſed and glorious thing were that!

Now, the diſtinguiſhing mark of thoſe two claſſes of preſumptuous men whom we firſt ſpoke of, is that they chooſe to govern their ſouls for themſelves, inſtead of ſubmitting themſelves to the direction of God; and hence their powers are kept under bondage to ſin, ſo that they cannot fully conquer their evil habits; nay, they even continue therein with content, or at leaſt with the conſent of their own will. But thoſe other noble, bleſſed, ſelf-renouncing men, who have given themſelves over to God, are exalted above themſelves; and hence, if they are overtaken in a fault, ſo ſoon as they are aware of it, they flee unto God with it, and ſtraightway the ſin is no more, and they are in a ſtate of godlike freedom. Shall they not then with reaſon deſire that God may prepare their ſouls?

Outward obſervances not a matter of neceſſity, but of choice to ſuch.

There is no need for theſe men to perform outward works, in addition, as if they were a matter of neceſſity. No! Now the text itſelf, in this one word, "Ariſe!" bids them to lift themſelves up: and is not that a work? Yes, one work it does behove them to fulfil without ceaſing, if they are ever to come to per-

fectneſs. They muſt continually ariſe, and have their minds directed upwards towards God, and their hearts free from entanglement, ever aſking, "Where is He "who is born a king?" and watching with humble fear and quick eye to diſcern what God deſires of them, that they may do His pleaſure. If God gives them to ſuffer, they ſuffer; if He gives them to work, they work; if He gives them to enjoy Him in contemplation, they contemplate. The ground of their own ſouls bears witneſs that God has cleanſed them and created them anew.

Of the myſterious converſe of the ſoul with God.

And this ground and ſubſtance of the ſoul will God poſſeſs alone, and will not that any creature ſhould enter therein. In this chamber of the heart God works through means in the one claſs of men, and without means in the other and more bleſſed ſort. But what He works in the ſouls of theſe laſt with whom He holds direct converſe, none can ſay, nor can one man give account of it to another, but he only who has felt it knows what it is; and even he can tell thee nothing of it, ſave only that God in very truth hath poſſeſſed the ground of his ſoul. And where this comes to paſs, outward works become of no moment, but the inward perceiving of God greatly increaſes. But when a man reaches the higheſt point that he may attain unto by his moſt earneſt endeavour and the help of God's grace, let him aſcribe nothing whatever unto himſelf; as our bleſſed Lord ſaid: "When ye have done all thoſe things which are com- "manded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants: we "have done that which it was our duty to do." Therefore, let a man be never ſo perfect, he ſhall

Luke xvii. 10.

At our beſt

eſtate we muſt ſtand in humble fear.

always ſtand in humble fear, at his higheſt glory; and ſhall always ſay and feel, "Father, thy will be done!" and ſhall at all times keep a watch upon himſelf, looking narrowly leſt he ſhould cleave unto one ſingle thing that is amiſs, and God ſhould find anything in the ſecret chambers of his heart that hinders His accompliſhing His glorious work therein without the help of means.

May God help us all ſo to ariſe that He may accompliſh His work in our ſouls! Amen.



VII.

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

(From the Goſpel for the day; and from Hoſea xiv. 1, 2.)

Of the great wonders which God has wrought, and ſtill works for us Chriſtian men; wherefore it is juſt and reaſonable that we ſhould turn unto Him and follow Him, and whereby we may diſcern between true and falſe converſion.

MATT. viii. 23. — "Jeſus went into a ſhip, and His diſciples followed Him." And HOSEA xiv. 1, 2.—"O Iſrael, return unto the Lord thy God; take with you words, and "turn to the Lord."

WE read in the Goſpel for this day that Jeſus went into a ſhip, and His diſciples followed Him. In like manner muſt all pious Chriſtians turn from ſin and follow Chriſt, as He commands us by the mouth of the Prophet Hoſea, ſaying: "O Iſrael, return unto "the Lord thy God."

Of God's dealings with His choſen people of Iſrael.

Out of all the tribes of mankind the Lord choſe one, to whom He ſhowed great kindneſs, and promiſed to do yet greater things for them, if they would turn with their whole heart unto Him, and not follow after the ways of the other nations who lived according to their ſinful luſts in the darkneſs and blindneſs of their hearts, and went aſtray with wicked lives and perverſe minds after the vanities of the world and the deceits of the Devil. And to this

end, God led His people out bodily by the hand of His ſervants and prophets, and alſo gave them His law to teach them, that they might behold His great power which He had glorified againſt their enemies, and His great love which He had manifeſted by numberleſs acts and unſpeakable benefits towards themſelves, being minded to do yet greater things for them hereafter, if they would truly turn to Him with their whole heart, and love Him, and keep His commandments. And he commanded them that they ſhould never forget the day on which they had been delivered out of the hands of their enemies, and from their cruel bondage and toil, but ſhould ſet themſelves with carneſtneſs and diligence to conſider His commandments, to keep them and do them. But this people was ſtiff-necked, heedleſs, and unthankful, and did not do as God had commanded by the mouth of His ſervants, but was continually ſelf-willed, perverſe, and bent on ſin; and therefore the Lord ſuffered them all to die in the wilderneſs, and ſlew many of them. And afterwards He ſent again other ſervants unto them, ſaying: "O my choſen people, if ye will be "converted and turn unto me with your whole heart, "and not go aſtray halting between two opinions, but "follow after me only, and forſake the way of the "Egyptians, the way of darkneſs, of ſin, and of "death, I will bring you into a land of righteouſneſs, "where all good things ſhall be given you."

Of their perverſeneſs.

Of their puniſhment.

Now all theſe things came to paſs under the old diſpenſation in paſt ages, with many ſigns and in hidden myſterious covenants ſealed by oaths. But they alſo foreſhadowed all that ſhould come to paſs in

Theſe things an enſample for us.

future ages after the incarnation of the Son of God, in the which we now live. Now He purpoſes to draw us likewiſe to Himſelf, by the help of theſe ſame words and teachings, if only we will turn unto Him; and therefore does He give us ſo many reaſons, exhortations, inſtructions or motives, that we ſhould turn unto Him with our whole hearts. He works now-a-days quite as many miracles and mighty deeds as then, among the Egyptians of this world and Pharaoh its king, ſpiritually and alſo viſibly, in the converſion of each one among us, if we gave heed thereto with thankful hearts. But alas! it is with too many of us as it was with the Iſraelites, we are only changed outwardly with the body, but our heart is yet in Egypt. We all paſs under good names, and make a fair ſhow, but in reality our whole affections and endeavours are turned towards the pleaſures and advantages of the fleſh and the world. And we are all the time ſo very careful and diligent to keep ſtrictly to all that is commanded reſpecting outward obſervances, ſuch as veſtments, chanting, kneeling, and the like, and are ſatisfied if all theſe matters are ſcrupulouſly obſerved, and ſit down contented, fancying that all is well with us, and that we are far enough from Egypt. Nay, verily, dear children, we are very wide of the mark; this is all a mere ſemblance and ſhadow, the leaves of the fig-tree which could not ſatisfy our Lord's hunger; He muſt find fruit on the tree, elſe it is nigh to be curſed by Him, that no man taſte fruit thereof to all eternity. Ah! how often have you been taught that you ought not to cleave unto mere ſhadows and outward forms. Although theſe be wholeſome and need-

God works as many wonders for us as He did for them.

Outward obſervances mere ſhadows and forms of

ſpiritual realities.

ful for beginners, ſtill they are but a long way off from the real truth and ſubſtance, for the ſake of which all theſe outward acts are performed. If you do not look to it betimes, you will have the outward ſhape remaining, while within there is all manner of ſin and wickedneſs cheriſhed in your hearts, as much as with thoſe who have not the ſhow of religion; and alas! men often fall into deeper vice under this cloak, than if they were yet in the Egypt of worldlineſs. It would be better for them if they had never quitted the world, for now is their damnation greater while they wear the garb of holineſs, not acting conformably to it, and yet claim and make uſe of all the privileges of their religious profeſſion.

How we muſt begin with learning good habits,

Children, I know of nothing ſo greatly needed as that thoſe who are entering on a religious life ſhould be inſtructed with all care, that they may know what things they ought firſt to learn, and then afterwards, when the outward practice of good works and piety has become a habit to them, that they may alſo know

but never reſt contented with them.

how to advance farther, and not content themſelves or be ſatisfied with outward habits; for theſe do not in themſelves make a perfect life, but are only a good preparation and a ſlight furtherance thereto. If this be early inſtilled into beginners, while they are yet young, docile, and quick of apprehenſion, and alſo hot and earneſt, it may be that ſome of them will ſtudy

Of thoſe who begin well in a Chriſtian life, but afterwards fall away.

betimes to preſs onwards to what is higher. But, alas! and worſe than alas! we have ſo often to behold the ſorrowful ſpectacle of ſome who began in the ſpirit with great zeal; who at firſt were ſo fervid that they would hardly turn their eyes upon any who might

lead their thoughts aſtray; and who now can hardly be perſuaded to quit men's company for an hour's meditation; ſome who at firſt could not bear to liſten to a worldly word, and now, early and late, you can ſcarcely get a reſpite from their goſſiping, and unprofitable queſtions and anſwers; at firſt they wanted to withdraw into ſilence and ſolitude, that they might by prayer and work ſuſtain their devoutneſs; and now, the more earthly care they can encumber themſelves with, the better they are pleaſed. Ah! this and the like is a certain ſign that they are held captive by the fleſh, that they have wandered into darkneſs, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. Children! for the love of Chriſt, look to yourſelves each of you, and ſee how it ſtands with you. However well you may begin in virtue, do not rely upon your good beginning, for all your piety may paſs away if you are not watchful. Our hearts are more unſtable than we can believe.

Some are at firſt ſo zealous for all righteouſneſs, that if they hear an idle word, or witneſs any other little failing, it makes them angry; but when they are a little older, they indulge without any rebuke of conſcience in ſuch levity, evil-ſpeaking, and often malicious and ſcornful ſpeeches, that they not only cauſe others vexation, but even ſerious trouble and ſorrow, and never even give it a thought whether they may have done ſo, but behave as if they had done perfectly right.

Of thoſe who begin with great courage and energy,

Some are at firſt ſo ſtrong, and ready to withſtand temptation and aſſaults, that they are not even afraid of the Devil: yea, they would fain be great and holy

martyrs; yet afterwards, when they have lived for a while among holy, pious people, you would hardly meet with more perverſe, croſs-grained, ſelf-willed perſons. Some are at firſt ſo eager to take upon themſelves all manner of hardſhips and indignities, that the ſeverities and ſelf-humiliation of thoſe with whom they live are too light and few for them; but after they have travelled this road for a while, they are not only able to ſubmit to the ordinary habits of others, but it is hardly poſſible to make things comfortable and eaſy enough for them to prevent their complaining, and every little inconvenience annoys them. Ah! what would not be needed to ſtop their murmuring!

yet afterwards fall into perverſeneſs and ſelf-indulgence.

Of the contrary ſort of men.

Very different from theſe are many pious, warm-hearted, ſpiritual-minded men, who find the croſs very hard to bear at firſt, but in a ſhort time make great progreſs, and become a moſt edifying and uſeful pattern to others, while thoſe from whom too much was expected have come to nothing. Hence we muſt be very much upon our guard becauſe of our inſtability; we know not what may overtake us in time to come.

How we may diſcover the reality of true converſion.

Dear children, that each of you may be able in ſome meaſure to mark whether he be converted or not, I will lay open to you a little, whereby we may perceive the ſincerity of our own converſion, and redemption from all the evil which our Enemy may try to lead us into by his various incitements to ſin. In our baptiſm we promiſed before God and the Church to withſtand all ſin, and to ſerve God in all holy living. But afterwards our wicked adverſary led

us aſtray again, ſo that we fell afreſh, and loſt the grace which had been given us; but God of his unſpeakable mercy calls us again to a new repentance, that all which we have loſt may be reſtored unto us. But herein many are beguiled by the Evil One into deadly error, ſo that they miſs this opportunity of amendment; for he knows how, with his cunning wiles, to cover our old ſins under the mantle of converſion, and thus to fruſtrate all a man's labour and toil. That we may be the better able to escape him, I will give you ſome tokens to mark which man is truly converted and which is not.

The true convert has a deep ſenſe of his own nothingneſs;

A truly converted Chriſtian man abides in a ſincere and humble confeſſion of his nothingneſs; all his deſire is that none ſhould ſet him above others, nor yet to rule over others, but rather to be ſubject in all meekneſs to another, according to whoſe will he may fulfil all his works. He thinks lightly of himſelf and his own wiſdom, and deſires in all things to take the loweſt place; and is willing to take advice, and interprets everything for the beſt; and ſimply in the fear of God, with a thankful heart, fulfils all that which he is bidden or counſelled, or that others beg of him to do. But, on the other hand, thoſe who are not truly converted think much of themſelves, and deem all their works and ſervices of great value, and it is not at all to their taſte to be ſubject to others, or that any ſhould have a right to command them, and are fond of reproving others unneceſſarily, and of diſcourſing on lofty matters, and boaſt themſelves proudly of all that belongs to them, and yet cover all this under a ſpecious ſhow of piety and humility,

but the falſe are arrogant, contentious, and ſelf-juſtifying.

that men may not take it amiſs of them. If any ſeem to put a ſlight upon them, they are contentious, and defend and juſtify themſelves to the utmoſt that they can. They are arrogant and ambitious, and unyielding in their hardneſs of ſpirit. Theſe are all ſtill in the hands of the Enemy, yea, did they wear the Pope's tiara.

The true converts are candid and generous;

Thoſe who are truly converted are kind-hearted to their neighbours, indulgent from brotherly love, praiſing the works of their neighbours as far as they can, and with great ſincerity of heart rejoice in the well-being of their neighbour, and lend him a helping hand wherever they can, and have great ſympathy with him in his troubles; but the falſely-converted are ſpiteful, and look with an evil eye on the uſefulneſs or piety of others, are ready to breed miſchief with a taunt, and are revengeful, ſneering, and puffed up in their own conceits.

but the falſe are ſpiteful and ſneering.

The true converts are patient and long-ſuffering;

The right ſort of men are patient under all the annoyance and injuſtice that God ſuffers to befall them, and bear it long with peaceable tempers. They ſpeak mildly, uſing ſoft words, and are wont meekly to ſeek reconciliation with thoſe who have done them wrong; but the falſe burn with anger, are envious of others' good fortune, ſlanderous, quarrelſome, and cenſorious, not orderly in all their affairs, and full of murmuring againſt all, above and below them, who do not conform to their wiſhes.

but the falſe are quarrelſome and cenſorious.

The truly righteous are helpful and charitable;

The truly righteous are ever gentle and merciful, ready to give and to aſſiſt as far as they are able, without regard to their own advantage; for they

deſpiſe the periſhable things of time, and maintain their love, enjoyment, and cheerfulneſs under diſtreſs, poverty, and contempt, being eaſily contented and cheerful, and thankful to Almighty God, in ſpirit looking up conſtantly to God who preſerves and ſuſtains them, and caſting behind them all unprofitable earthly anxieties, that they may give the more heed to the things of God and eternity. But the falſe burn like a furnace with the deſire of temporal things, and ſeek their own pleaſure and eaſe when and how they may, and often ſteal time and other things for it, that they may not be diſcovered by their ſuperiors; or if they can no longer conceal their practices, then they indulge in them with an obſtinate bold face, and ſteal time for themſelves ſhameleſſly in the teeth of their maſters. They want to have praiſe and earthly reward for all that they do, and if they are not honoured and thought highly of, they become like one poſſeſſed, and openly or ſecretly do all the harm they can for ſpite and vexation. They are always hoping to receive a worldly and corruptible reward for their religious profeſſions, and are often ſeduced into actual deceit and lying, in their ſtruggle to get honour or to ſave their reputation.

but the falſe love to keep things for themſelves,

whereby they are often led into grievous ſin.

The upright are careful to fill up their time induſtriouſly, with good and uſeful undertakings to the glory of God and the good of their neighbours, rejoicing in ſpirit as they exerciſe themſelves in good works, endeavouring to do all things well, and continue with hearty truſt in God, ſteadfaſt in goodneſs. The falſe converts are conſtantly indolent and half-hearted in their work, wavering, ill-mannered, eaſily

The truly upright are induſtrious and careful of their time;

but the falſe are indolent and cowardly.

diſheartened, and altogether drowſy, their minds lying waſte and their hearts undiſciplined.

The true converts are diſcreet and temperate;

The true converts are moderate and decorous in the ſatisfying of their natural wants, ſhunning all exceſs, and if they by accident tranſgreſs, avoiding it for the future. By moderation in eating, they keep their faculties clear and under control; and above all, they moſt earneſtly guard againſt any exceſs in drinking.

but the falſe are given to ſelf-indulgence.

But falſe profeſſors are given to eating and drinking, yet they can never fully ſatisfy their deſires, and are unthankful to God for the food He gives them. Without reſtraint or good manners, they cram their bodies, whereby they often bring on grievous ſickneſſes, and they ſeek their pleaſure without ſhame wherever they can. And after exceſs at table, ſome give way to unſeemly levity in words and gestures, and inconvenient jeſting, and telling and hearing all manner of tales. Others become quarrelſome, brawling, and ſo noiſy, that to hear their ſenſeleſs cries you would think them aſſes, not men. Some become ſo ſleepy and lazy after dinner, that they could ſcarcely repeat the Lord's Prayer without a blunder; and in general, ſloth and the like commonly proceed from ſtrong drinks and over-feeding.

Of the evils that do ſpring from luxurious habits.

Hence it is that all holy men have inſiſted ſo ſtrongly upon ſimplicity in food and drink, that they might give no cauſe in themſelves or others to ſuch infirmities. But now, alas! it has gone ſo far, that even the clergy, for the moſt part, cannot, or rather will not, content themſelves even with rich men's fare; and from this cauſe their blindneſs has grown ſo great that it is rare now-a-days to find one who is really aware of the

dangers from this ſource to which he is expoſed by the aſſaults or ſuggeſtions of the Devil. For the adverſary is apt to bring theſe men ſooner than they think for into an inclination towards, or even to commit acts of foul uncleanneſs, by defiling their heart with obſcene thoughts and evil luſts; and in this way they often ſin groſſly, and provoke God more than they believe. And then the tumult of evil deſires within makes them to be unfit for good works, and diſpleaſing to God and holy men; and they are ſo toſſed, and driven, and blinded by paſſion, that they actually try to quench it in riotous company, and in eating and drinking. This leads to inordinate merriment and light diſcourſe, which are generally wont to eſtrange a man ſo much from all godly thoughts, that afterwards he can hardly read a verſe with devotion; and in his very prayers the Devil brings the ſcenes he has witneſſed and the language he has heard ſo vividly before him, that he can ſcarce hold in his tittering and laughing.

The true converts are pure of heart;

The righteous and truly converted men are ſo ſhamefaced and chaſte of heart before God and the angels, that they would rather die than conceive an impure image in their hearts, and with all watchfulneſs they preſerve their mind pure and unſullied, and they diligently keep all their ſenſes and members under ſtrict and conſtant control, inſomuch that they will hardly pay any attention to their own bodies, except for ſafety and cleanlineſs; and for the better preſerving of their pureneſs of mind, they chaſtiſe their bodies with faſting, and watching, and toil, exerciſing conſtant prayerfulneſs and truſt in God, in

but the falſe do let their thoughts run wild,

whom all their help lies. But the falſe of heart do not ſee much harm in looking at and dwelling on evil, ſinful thoughts and images in their hearts; hence they often come into ſuch perturbation of ſoul and body, that they ſtand, as it were, in the very gate of hell; yea, they often fall ſo deep, as to give conſent to ſin with their heart, and would actually fulfil all wickedneſs if the opportunity aroſe. So unthinkingly do they fall through love of themſelves, in ſeeking the pleaſure of the body! Some of theſe become ſo hardened, and reſtleſs, and maddened with the ſenſe of reſtraint, that they come to hate God for having forbidden the luſts of the fleſh, and wiſh He did not know of their ſins, or was not able to puniſh them, which is as much as to wiſh that there were no God.

which oft-times leads them into outward ſin alſo.

How we ſhould all take heed to our goings that our foot-ſteps ſlip not.

And now, dear children, conſider how you ſtand; and, ſeeing the perils which beſet us all, let no one be too ſecure or too bold, but let each look to himſelf in fear; and however well it may be with him now, let him not truſt in his goodneſs; and however deeply he may have fallen, or however far he may have wandered, let him now turn and be converted of a truth, for the path to all goodneſs ſtands yet open to him ſo long as God ſpares him in life. That we may all enter therein, may God help us! Amen.

VIII.

Sermon for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

(From the Goſpel for St. Matthias'-day, 24th February.)

Of the proper marks of true humility.

MATT. xi. 29.—"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."

Chriſt's leſſons eaſy and plain.

CHRIST, our bleſſed Lord, the true maſter and teacher of all art and virtue, and a pattern of all perfection, when He came down from Heaven to inſtruct us poor ignorant men, did not ſee fit to make uſe of great ſubtleties, or myſterious and ingenious ſtatements of truth; but in ſhort, plain, ſimple words He delivered to us a maxim, and gave us a very ſhort, eaſy leſſon, which we were well able to learn. Now this ſtood written in the book of His holy humanity, in large, diſtinct letters, eaſy to be read, and runs thus: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly "in heart."

What ſhorter, eaſier, more intelligible leſſon could be ſet us? But we muſt give our minds with willing induſtry to read it over and over again attentively, and practiſe it in our life, ever looking to the admirable model of the divine humanity of Chriſt, whoſe whole life was not only meek and humble, but whoſe words, ways, walk, and all that ever He did, are ſimply the

Chriſt's whole life an illuſtration of humility.

illuſtration of this doctrine. Hence He choſe at the beginning ſuch ſcholars and diſciples as were ſpecially fitted to learn this doctrine, and theſe were the holy Apoſtles, and His bleſſed mother, who ſaid when ſhe had conceived Him: "He hath regarded the lowli-"neſs of His handmaiden." Thus He ſays, in the Goſpel for this day, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord "of Heaven and earth, becauſe Thou haſt hid theſe "things from the wiſe and prudent" (that is from the proud), "and haſt revealed them unto babes" (that is to the humble). From this we gather that none but the humble are able to receive the hidden things of God. Therefore, dear children, that we may obtain this grace, and the better learn this leſſon, we ſhall now conſider ſome tokens of true lowlineſs which is never without meekneſs, and theſe are the following:

Of the tokens of true humility.

No outward office regarded as too mean.

He who ſincerely deſires to become lowly of heart, muſt not be aſhamed of performing any outward office ſuch as the worldly heart thinks mean and humiliating; for as it is a ſure token of converſion from ſin that it becomes hateful to the man, ſo it is a ſign of true repentance, when he is ready in all things to take the meaneſt place, if that he may attain to that true lowlineſs of heart which is ſeated inwardly in the ſoul. And he who will go forward in this bleſſed path muſt faithfully examine himſelf, and to this end God alſo will beſtow on him ſuch great grace as he has never had before.

Faults readily acknowledged.

He muſt always be ready to acknowledge himſelf in fault towards whomſoever it may be, and eſteem others better than himſelf; for by ſo doing the loving heart can beſt ſoften the diſpoſitions of men, and

touch their hearts, and win them over to meekneſs. And although he be ſometimes not juſtly to be reckoned as in fault at all, yet knowing that he might have done the wrong, he ſhall always behave himſelf humbly, for the ſake of love, to the glory of God, ſeeing that God has forgiven him ſins ere he committed them; for it is equally an act of mercy to forgive ſins, or to preſerve us from ſinning.

A generous and impartial love towards all.

In the third place, it belongs to a lowly heart to be kindly affected towards all, not with a partial love; that is, not to ſhow more kindneſs to one than another, to friends more than ſtrangers, but to do good to all for God's ſake, as our neighbours, not from mere natural affection, but to beſtow on all a free, generous love (like our Father in Heaven, "who "maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and the good, "and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt"), and alſo to love each according to his worthineſs.

In the fourth place, it is neceſſary to lowlineſs of heart that we diveſt and diſencumber ourſelves of all things, that we may cleave only to our merciful God, and become one with Him; for God will not and cannot unite Himſelf or dwell with a worldly heart. Therefore let a man bow himſelf to the earth beneath God and his creatures, in ſelf-annihilation inward and outward; and this is what is meant by forſaking all things, and putting away the creature. The fifth token of true lowlineſs of heart is to know how to ſuffer to the glory of God, for ſincere love of God, ſimply hoping, believing, and truſting in Him.

A readineſs to ſuffer for the glory of God.

Thus a lowly walk conſiſts in three things; in patient endurance, in giving up out of love and faith,

and in hope towards God. And from theſe flows the ſenſe of our own wretchedneſs, the knowledge of our Creator, and a will wholly reſigned to God, not for our own ſake, but for the glory of God. May God help us to learn thus to be meek and lowly of heart. Amen!

IX.

Sermon for Septuageſima Sunday.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

In this Sermon following we are taught how we muſt perpetually preſs forward towards our higheſt good, without pauſe or reſt; and how we muſt labour in the ſpiritual vineyard that it may bring forth good fruit.

MATT. XX. 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an houſeholder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard."

Of the houſeholder who went out to hire labourers into his vineyard.

THIS houſeholder went out early at the firſt hour, and again at the third and at the ſixth hours, and hired labourers for a penny a day. But when it was quite late in the evening he went out again, and ſtill found men ſtanding idle. Then he ſaid unto them, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle? Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right I will give you.

The houſeholder is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Dear children, this houſeholder ſignifies our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; His houſe is the heavens, and this earth, and purgatory, and hell. He ſaw that all nature had gone aſtray, inſomuch that His lovely vineyard lay a barren waſte; and man, whom He had made to poſſeſs this fair and fruitful vineyard, had wandered far away from Him, and left this excellent vineyard to be untilled. But the Lord of the vineyard determined to invite men to return into this vineyard for

which He had created him, and went out early to that end.

In what ſenſe He went out early.

Dear children, in one ſenſe Jeſus Chriſt went out early from the divine boſom of the Father, and yet evermore dwells there. But in another ſenſe, He went out early in human nature, that He might hire us into His ſervice, and bring us back again into His noble vineyard, and ſo there might be labourers to till it. And He went out at the firſt hour, and alſo at the third, and ſixth, and ninth hours. And at the eleventh hour He went out once more, and again found men ſtanding idle, to whom he ſpoke roughly, ſaying, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle? Then they anſwered, No man hath hired us, Lord. Theſe idle men whom no man hath hired are thoſe who are ſtill in their original, uncorrupt, and innocent ſtate, and hence they are rightly called bleſſed; for God ſaw as He looked on them, that they were unhired; that is, not held in ſervitude to the world and the creatures. There are ſome who are God's hired labourers, and theſe are in a higher ſenſe free, and at large, and not held in ſervitude to the world or the creature. But theſe of whom we are now ſpeaking are ſtill ſtanding idle, which ought not to be; that is, they are ſtanding in apathy, cold, loveleſs, and devoid of grace; for ſo long as a man is not ſtanding in the grace of God, he is ſtanding alone in nature. And if ſuch a man (were it poſſible, which it is not) were to fulfil all the good works which have ever been done in this world, he would ſtill, nevertheleſs, be living altogether idly, unprofitably, and in vain, and it would avail him nothing. Again, this going out early in the morning is a type

Of thoſe who are ſtanding idle both from the world and from God.

of the dawning of the grace of God in the ſoul; for the morning is the end of the night, when the darkneſs vaniſhes, and the day-ſpring of grace ariſes in the ſoul of man, and God ſays, Wherefore ſtand ye here idle? Go ye into my vineyard, and what is right, that will I give you.

Of the beginners in God's vineyard who think much of outward works.

But the men entered after a very unequal manner into the vineyard. One claſs are thoſe who are mere beginners; theſe work in God's vineyard with outward acts, and bodily exerciſes, and ſelf-impoſed taſks, and are perſuaded that they are accompliſhing great good works with their faſting, watching, and praying; while they never look to the purity of their motives, but retain their love of earthly enjoyments, and their own likes and diſlikes. And therefrom do ſpring up injuſtice, falſe judgment, and many faults; ſuch as pride, earthly or ſpiritual, bitterneſs or enmity, and more of the like, that greatly hinder the outpouring of divine grace, if we allow theſe untoward diſpoſitions to break forth in words or actions. Let one who has thus been building upon a falſe foundation give heed to himſelf, and watch how he may beſt condemn and deſtroy this inward falſehood, that it lead not to his own ruin, nor cauſe harm to thoſe with whom he may hold converſe.

Of the ſecond claſs, who find pleaſure in well-doing without thinking of God as its end.

A ſecond claſs of men who have likewiſe entered into God's vineyard, are thoſe who are above living for mere temporal things, and have alſo overcome their groſſer ſins, and have turned their minds towards higher things. Their life is ſpent in the rational practice of virtue; and in this they find ſuch pleaſure and delight, that they are contented with their condi-

tion, and miſs the higheſt and ſublimeſt truth; for they abide in the preſent ſenſe of ſatisfaction, and do not pant to reach upward through and above this enjoyment to the eternal God Himſelf. For our delight ought to be in God Himſelf, not in theſe gifts of His.

Of the third claſs of truly noble men, who ſeek nothing but God Himſelf.

But the third claſs of thoſe who go into God's vineyard are truly noble and highly-favoured men, who in deed and truth riſe above all creature things in God's vineyard; for they ſeek and love nothing but ſimply God in Himſelf. They neither look to pleaſure, nor to any ſelfiſh end, nor to that which is a mere outflow from God; for their inner man is wholly plunged in God, and they have no end but the praiſe and glory of God, that His good pleaſure alone may be fulfilled in and through them and in all creatures. Hence they are able to bear all things and to reſign all things, for they receive all things as from God's hand, and offer up to Him again in ſimplicity of heart all that they have received from Him, and do not lay claim to any of His mercies. They are like a river that flows out with every tide, and then again haſtens back to its ſource. So do theſe men refer all their gifts back to the ſource whence they proceed, and flow back again unto it themſelves likewiſe. For inaſmuch as they carry all the gifts of God back unto their divine fountain, and do not claim any ownerſhip in them, either for pleaſure or advantage, and do not purpoſe this nor that, but ſimply God alone, God muſt of neceſſity be their only refuge and ſtay, outward or inward.

How they refer all things to God.

But although this aim carry a man ſo completely

out of himſelf, and be perfectly ſimple and directed to nothing but God, yet nature has ſome regard to herſelf, of which a man cannot be wholly bereft. Whether he chooſe it or no (this is a ſimple fact), he cannot but always deſire to feel God's preſence; and ſo too it is a natural inſtinct to wiſh to be happy. But this deſire ſhould be far from his ſtrongeſt, and the leaſt part of what he takes into the account in his purpoſes. [*And here I wiſh to rebuke all thoſe religious perſons who are leaning on their good works, and as it were keep a right of property in them, thinking themſelves free to do or not to do them. For whenever they ſee or imagine any new undertaking or religious practice which can afford them inward or outward ſatisfaction, they give themſelves to it with prayer, and ſtriving, and weeping, and watching. And as long as they find pleaſure in it, they cannot have enough of it; but if this ſenſe of pleaſure and intereſt paſſes away, their devotion paſſes away likewiſe, and they come to diſlike their good and holy work, and then they grow lukewarm and careleſs, performing all they do without devotion. All this is owing to their not having had a ſingle eye to God's glory. They have been prompted and ſuſtained in their labour by the pleaſure it has yielded them, and now this has fled. For we muſt not ſeek enjoyment and ſweetneſs in the gifts of God, either in holy exerciſes, or in words or works; but we muſt take delight in God alone, and not in His gifts.

Of thoſe who treat their good works as their own property.

* The parts encloſed between brackets are wanting in the Straſburg MSS.; but, according to the Frankfort Edition of 1826, exiſt in the edition of 1498.

We muſt not ſeek ſolace in ſaints or angels, but in God only.

There are, however, ſome religious perſons who will not be left without ſolace or ſtay. For rather than be left ſimply and truly without a ſolace, deſtitute and bare, they ſet up for themſelves heavenly beings, ſuch as the ſaints and angels, and claim a ſort of right to them as a ſource of ſpiritual enjoyment, and look to them as a conſolation. Thus they will ſay: "Such a ſaint or "angel is dear to me before all others;" and if you throw down this prop of their own raiſing, and ſay that they ought not to ſpeak thus, you leave them little peace; nay, they are greatly diſquieted; and this is worſt of all, and doing God a great wrong. Thou muſt not place thy reliance on any creature in heaven or on earth, nor repoſe nor lean on any ſave God alone. If thou didſt truſt Him really and truly, all His ſaints would be truly and rightly honoured and reverenced by thee; for the departed ſaints are always abſorbed in the divine, fatherly abyſs of the Holy Trinity. For I tell thee by that Truth, which is God Himſelf, if thou art ever to become a man after the will of God, every thing muſt die in thee to which thou art cleaving, whether it be God's gifts, or the ſaints, or the angels, or even all that would afford thee conſolation for thy ſpiritual wants: all muſt be given up. If God is to ſhine in on thy ſoul brightly, without a cloud, and accompliſh His noble and glorious will in thee, thou muſt be free and unencumbered by all that affords thee comfort out of God.

We are not, therefore, forbidden to honour God's ſervants.

We are not, therefore, forbidden to honour the bleſſed ſaints, but only to claim any property in their merits for the ſake of our own delight in them; for I tell thee, that if thou hadſt all manner of heavenly

grace from God, and didſt poſſeſs the good works of all mankind, ſo ſoon as thou ſhouldſt claim it as thine own, for the ſake of thine own delight therein, that moment all this goodneſs would be ſullied and defaced with thine own evil. For a true and faithful ſervant of God ſhall be always preſſing upward to what is before him, not ſuffering himſelf to be held back by comfort or pleaſure, joy or ſorrow, wealth or poverty. Through all this he ſhall urge onward, till he come unto the infinite ocean of the Godhead. And therein he ſhall be loſt without his own knowledge, and dazzled by exceſs of light and love. There it ſhall be given him to know all that belongs to true perfection.]

How ſpiritual enjoyment is to be to us as food, taken that we may have ſtrength to labour.

A good and devout man ſhall be like the labourer in the vineyard, who works all the day long, and nevertheleſs he muſt take food. But the labour is long and the meal barely laſts an hour, and he only takes it for the ſake of the work. He muſt eat that he may work, and the nouriſhment he takes diffuſes itſelf through every part of his body, continually ſupplying it with freſh ſtrength, which again is conſumed in his labour; and when it has been conſumed with labour he eats again a little, that he may again conſume it by working in the Lord's vineyard. So is it with a noble-minded man. When he feels an inclination in himſelf to enjoy God or His heavenly grace and what is thereof, let him for a little while ſeek and purpoſe his own good, but not longer than is needful for the nouriſhing of his ſoul, that he may conſume his ſpiritual ſtrength again in labour; and when it has thus been ſpent in the nobleſt of all ways, from a love flowing back unto God who has inſpired

it, then the man muſt go for refreſhment again into the river of life that floweth out from the throne of God, that it may again bring forth in him the fruit of good works. All theſe ſpiritual men who thus know how to reſign or to return again unto God, with their body and their ſpirits, the gifts that He has mercifully beſtowed on them, with deep, humble ſelf-renunciation, theſe do continually grow more able and more worthy to receive bleſſing from God. Where ſuch admirable, god-like men are to be found, they were worthy, as none elſe are, to be fed with gold and ſilver and fine pearls, and the beſt that the world contains as their heritage. But there is many a poor noble man of God, who has none of all theſe things; let ſuch an one humbly caſt himſelf on the all-powerful God and truſt him utterly; without doubt thy heavenly Father will and muſt provide thee well, yea, wert thou hidden in a rock.

If we do ſo, God will provide for all our wants.

Theſe exalted and moſt noble men are juſt like the wood of the vine, which is outwardly hard and black and dry, and good for no purpoſe whatever; and if we had never ſeen it before, we ſhould think it of no uſe at all, and good for nothing but to be thrown into the fire, and burned. But in this dry wood of the vine, there lie concealed the living veins of ſap, and power of yielding the nobleſt of all juices, and of bringing forth a greater abundance of fruit than any other ſort of wood that grows. And thus it is with theſe beloved and lowly children, who are at all times and ſeaſons plunged in God; they are outwardly in appearance like unto black rotten wood, ſeeming unto men dry and unprofitable.

How the nobleſt men are often outwardly inſignificant like the vine.

For there are many of theſe who are humble, noways remarkable for their gifts, outward or inward, nor for any extraordinary works or ſayings or exerciſes of devotion, and who move in the narroweſt sphere; but living veins from the fountain of truth lie hidden within them, forasmuch as they have aſked for no earthly heritage, but God is their lot and their portion, their life and their being.

How the vine-dreſſer prunes the vine.

Now the vine-dreſſer goes out and prunes the vine, lopping off the wild ſhoots; for if he neglected this, and ſuffered them to remain on the good ſtem, the whole would yield bad, ſour wine. So likewiſe ſhall good men do: they ſhall cut off from themſelves all that is not according to God's order in their conduct or diſpoſitions, likings or diſlikings, and deſtroy it to the very root; thou ſhalt cut away all evil failings from thy heart, and it will do thee no harm, either in head or in hand, or any member. But hold thy knife ſtill, till thou haſt really ſeen what ought to be cut off. If a vine-dreſſer be not ſkilled in his art, he is as likely to crop off the good branches which bear the grapes as the wild ſhoots, and thus ſpoil the vineyard. So it is with thoſe who do not underſtand this ſpiritual art; they leave the roots of vice and evil diſpoſitions alive in the heart, and hew and lop at poor nature, and thereby deſtroy this noble vineyard. Nature is in itſelf good and noble, why ſhouldſt thou hew away aught that belongs to it? For I tell thee that when the time is come for it to yield fruit in a godly, bleſſed, devout life, then it will be ſeen that thou haſt ſpoiled thy nature.

We muſt not uſe the knife on nature, but on vice.

How the

After this the labourer binds up the vine, putting

vine-dreſſer trains the vine.

in ſtakes; he bends the upper branches down towards the earth, and faſtens the vine to a ſtrong framework, that it may have a ſupport. This is a type of the ſweet and holy life, the ſacred example and ſufferings of our bleſſed Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for theſe and nothing of our own ſhould be a man's ſtay. For the higher powers of his reaſon ſhall be drawn down into due control, and he ſhall ſink low in deep ſubmiſſive humility before Our Lord, in truth and not with hypocriſy, with all his powers, outward and inward. For when both the appetites of the body, and the higheſt intellectual powers of the ſoul are thus trained and bound down, each in its own place, ſo that neither the ſenſes nor the will, nor any faculty, is left too free and too proud, but they are at all times controlled and trained into due rightful order under the Divine will, and man's deſire at all times, and in all things, is to be, by the help and grace of God, to the utmoſt of his power, outwardly and inwardly obedient to the Divine will, without contradiction, in all that the Eternal God, our Heavenly Father, has determined in His eternal divine counſels;—[and when all the powers humbly act in this way, in dependence upon God, whether they are exerciſed or kept in check,—were it within the bounds of reaſonable poſſibility that a man could be conſcious of poſſeſſing all the good works, and all the heavenly graces of all mankind, and yet took none of all this unto himſelf, but, calling nothing his own, ſtood up deſtitute and bare, in free, ſimple love to God, as if all this goodneſs belonged to another, and not himſelf;—Children, wherever ſuch noble men may exiſt or live in this age of grace, in them may the

So muſt all our powers be trained after the pattern of Chriſt's example.

If it were ſo with us, God

Father of Heaven truly and abſolutely accompliſh His divine and myſterious work without any hindrance. And in him whoſe heart is not ſincerely ſtanding thus toward God, as to the guiding principle of his life, in him, doubt not that this holy, divine birth cannot be truly brought to paſs or be made fruitful.]

would truly accompliſh His work in and with us.

Afterward the vine-dreſſer digs about the ſtems of the vine, and roots out all noxious weeds. Thus ſhall a devout man dig about the ſoil of his own heart by cloſe obſervation and teſting of his own principles, to ſee whether there be aught for him to root out. And if he find anything, let him that moment pluck it up, however trifling or unimportant it may be, that the beams of the eternal and divine ſun may penetrate the farther into his very midſt, ſhining with unbeclouded force, and fructifying his nobleſt powers. For thus the glorious ſun draws the juices outward into the living veſſels which lie hidden in the bark, and then the fair cluſters begin to appear. Ah! children, if man knew how ſo to tend his vine, that God's ſun might ſhine in on and vivify his ſoul, what ſweet, excellent, delicious fruit would the eternal ſun draw forth from him! For the lovely ſun ſhines with all its fulneſs into him, and works within theſe precious cluſters, and makes them flouriſh in ſweetneſs and beauty. Their bloſſoms ſend forth a ſweet and delicate fragrance, which diſpels all poiſonous vapours; neither ſerpent nor toad can endure their perfume, when the eternal divine ſun ſhines direct among the branches, and through the cluſters. The fruit is ſo entirely of God's producing, and flouriſhes in ſuch beauty and richneſs, in pure looking up to God, whoſe rays draw

How the vine-dreſſer weedeth the vineyard.

How the ſun maketh the vine to fructify.

forth from it ſuch wondrous and delicious ſavour and perfume, that it needs muſt deſtroy the venom of the old ſerpent; yea, had all the devils in hell, and all the men on earth conſpired together, they would not be able in the leaſt to injure a thoroughly godly-minded and God-loving man, but the more they ſtrive to injure him, the deeper he is rooted and the higher he is built up in God with all his powers. And if ſuch an admirable man, bearing his precious fruit, were to be caſt down to the depths of hell, he muſt needs turn it into a kingdom of heaven, and God and eternal bleſſedneſs would exiſt in hell. And a man who ſhould bear ſuch fruit would not need to fear in anywiſe all the reproach that could be heaped upon him. When we have no aim but God, nothing can part us from Him, or lead us aſtray.

How the divine ſun ripeneth the fruits of the ſoul.

Now after that the vine has been well pruned, and its ſtem cleared of all weeds, the glorious ſun ſhineth yet more brightly, and caſteth his heat on the precious cluſters, and theſe grow more and more tranſparent, and the ſweetneſs begins to diſcloſe itſelf more and more. And to ſuch a man as we have deſcribed, all means of communication between God and his ſoul begin after a time to grow ſo tranſparent that the rays and glances of the divine ſun reach him without ceaſing, that is, as often and as ſoon as he turns himſelf towards them in feeling and thought. This divine ſun ſhines much more brightly than all the ſuns in the firmament ever ſhone; and in its light all the man's ways, and works, and doings are ſo changed into its image, that he feels nothing to be ſo true as God, with a certainty that is rooted in the very

midſt of his being, yet is far above the ſphere of his reaſon, and which he can never fully expreſs, for it is too deep and too high above all human reaſon to be explored and underſtood.

After this the vine-dreſſer loves to ſtrip off the leaves, that thus the ſun may have nothing to hinder its rays from pouring on the grapes. In like manner do all means of grace fall away from this man, ſuch as images of the ſaints, teachings, holy exerciſes, ſet prayers, and the like. Yet let none caſt theſe things aſide before they fall away of themſelves through divine grace: that is to ſay, when a man is drawn up above all that he can comprehend, then do theſe precious and divine fruits grow more ſweet and delightful than either ſenſe or reaſon may conceive, and it is poſſible for him to be carried ſo far that his ſpirit is as it were ſunk and loſt in the abyſs of the Deity, and loſes the conſciouſneſs of all creature diſtinctions. All things are gathered together in one with the Divine ſweetneſs, and the man's being is ſo penetrated with the Divine ſubſtance, that he loſes himſelf therein, as a drop of water is loſt in a caſk of ſtrong wine. And thus the man's ſpirit is ſo ſunk in God in divine union, that he loſes all ſenſe of diſtinction; and all that has brought him to this point, ſuch as humility, the ſeeking God's glory,—nay, his very ſelf,—loſes its name, and there remains a ſecret, ſtill union, without cloud or colour. And all good purpoſes are fuſed into a true and pure oneneſs, and a real but ſilent myſtery, ſuch as human powers can ſcarce apprehend. [Children, could we but truly ſtand in this holy of holies for an hour or a moment, it were a

Of the bleſſedneſs of utter union with God.

How one moment of

ſuch a union were better than forty years of outward works.

thouſand times better and more profitable for us, and more pleaſing and praiſeworthy in the ſight of the Eternal God, than forty years ſpent in your own ſelf-impoſed taſks.]

That we may thus give place to God, [for Him to do His work in us, and die to all to which we ought to die, that we may live truly and only to that to which we ought to live, if this exalted work of God is to be accompliſhed in us and through us,] may He help us. Amen!

X.

Sermon for Aſh Wedneſday.

GAL. ii. 19.—"I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt "liveth in me."

THE holy Apoſtle Paul, whoſe endeavours towards a perfect life were all founded upon endurance and true reſignation, ſhows us in himſelf how a righteous, ſpiritual man, being nailed with Chriſt to the croſs, and whoſe ſufferings bring forth in him the living fruits of the Spirit, now no longer liveth through himſelf, but Chriſt liveth in him, as is taught in the words which he writes to the Galatians, ſaying: "I "am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet "not I, but Chriſt liveth in me." Again he continues: "The life which I now live in the fleſh, I live "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and "gave Himſelf for me." In theſe words we have a wholeſome admonition to ſtrive after ſuch a life as that Chriſt may be glorified in us, and His bitter grief and croſs may be manifeſted in our mortal body, to the bettering of our neighbour and ourſelves. Wherefore we ought to obſerve here, that though there be many kinds of croſs and ſuffering, of which each has its own length, and depth, and breadth, and height, yet there is only one on which our eternal redemption

How Paul could ſay that he was crucified with Chriſt.

Though there be many croſſes, yet there is but one that bringeth ſalvation.

was accompliſhed; that is, the croſs of Chriſt's humanity, which again points us to a ſtill higher croſs (yet, ſo to ſpeak, without croſs and pain), of His divine nature. So likewiſe there were two croſſes which ſtood beſide the croſs of Chriſt; the one bearing the malefactor on His right hand, and the other on His left. From all which we purpoſe to gather ſome ſpiritual emblems that may help us to diſcern what ſort of croſs and grief it is that we are bearing, and to which of theſe three croſſes it may be compared. This we may tell by the following tokens.

Of thoſe who are hanging on the croſs of outward works.

By the croſs of the malefactor on Chriſt's left hand may be underſtood thoſe who have made a religious profeſſion, and are hanging on the croſs of continual exerciſes and outward auſterities which they have bound themſelves to practiſe; they have well-deſerved this croſs, but it brings them no profit, becauſe they have not died on it to ſelf-will and other ſinful failings. It is poſſible for them after this crucifixion to go down to eternal torment with the unjuſt malefactor; ſo that, to uſe a common proverb, they drag the barrow here and the waggon in the world to come. The height of this croſs is the ſpiritual pride and ſelf-complacency which they have in the ſtrictneſs of their life, on account of which they ſet themſelves up above others; for none can be good enough for them, and they lay great ſtreſs on ſuch auſterities, deſpiſing all who do not lead ſuch a life as themſelves.

St. Auguſtine ſaid to his brethren: "Dear brethren, "rather than you ſhould ſay or think yourſelves to be "different from or better than other men, I would "that you ſhould return to the world. You ought to

"ſay, as Chriſt did by the mouth of his Prophet "David: 'I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of "men, and deſpiſed of the people;' and with the "publican: 'God be merciful to me a ſinner.'"

Of the depths of ſin into which theſe formaliſts are in danger of falling.

The depth of this croſs is a type of the depth of ſin into which ſuch men fall; and that comes hence, that their inward principle is falſe through and through, and they have never taken pains to look within and examine their evil unchanged hearts, and amend them; they lean altogether on outward exerciſes, which at the ſame time they hate, and perform with backward hearts. They know nothing of a union with God, or of His myſteries; nay, they no more reach after anything of this kind by queſtioning, or inquiring, or ſeeking, than they think of the Sultan over the ſea, and take no more thought about it than if it in no wiſe concerned them. If they hear talk of divine things, they underſtand as much of them as a German does of Italian. They ſay their prayers and read their Bibles, and perform their dry works of obedience with the outward man and their ſenſes; and with this they are well ſatisfied. Let God unite Himſelf with whom He will, what does that concern them? But if it were a queſtion of outward advantage in reſpect of gain, or honour, or other things that might be turned to account, which any one had obtained thereby, then we ſhould ſee whether it concerned them or not. Hence, in ſpite of their pious acts, it comes to this, that when they are called on to renounce their own way and will, they behave as if they were deaf or ſenſeleſs. Thus St. Auguſtine writes: "I do not know wickeder, more utterly

"corrupt men than thoſe who fall away while main-
"taining a religious profeſſion; for not ſeldom they
"fall ſo deeply into ſin, that they come to err from
"the faith and the things touching the Holy Scrip-
"tures, and thus ſink under the croſs to which they
"are bound and faſtened."

How thoſe who are ever ſeeking after lawful indulgences do often ſtray from the narrow way, and may haply loſe it for ever.

The width or breadth of this croſs is that they go the wide, broad, well-trodden way that leadeth unto hell; for they live after the fleſh, and therefore they do not ſeek after the ſweetneſs of the ſpirit; for he who liveth to the fleſh cannot pleaſe God. He who will not ſeek the narrow path that leadeth unto eternal life, muſt needs often be delayed and loſe the way, by which means he is made too late to find the way that leadeth unto life. This is the caſe with thoſe who ſeek and intend themſelves in all things, and are always wanting to get ſome eaſe and to gain ſome indulgence from the Lord, now for this, now for that forbidden thing; in a word, to have nothing to bear is what would ſuit them beſt. For this very reaſon they are obliged to bear a heavy croſs in their conſcience whether they like it or no, and have no confidence towards God whom they have ſet at nought, nor yet any conſolation from the world which deſpiſes them. Ah! dear children, what a hard life and croſs is theirs! They would fain be without pain, and have the very bittereſt pain; which will, moreover, be followed by eternal pain, unleſs they repent and turn to God.

How ſuch are apt to perſevere impenitent unto the end, and be-

The length of this croſs is, that they remain and perſevere impenitent and without virtue unto the end; and this comes from their great ingratitude, inaſmuch as God has beſtowed on them ſuch great grace

before other worldly people who would have made better uſe of it, and has viſited them in ſo many good influences and admonitions, inward and outward, as often even to raiſe their own wonder; and for all that they do not turn from evil. Of theſe ſays Paul: "For "it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, "and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made "partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the "good word of God and the powers of the world to "come, if they ſhall fall away, to renew them again "unto repentance; ſeeing they crucify to themſelves "the Son of God afreſh, and put him to an open "ſhame." And he gives us a likeneſs for them: "For "the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft "upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by "whom it is dreſſed, receiveth bleſſing from God: but "that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and "is nigh unto curſing: whoſe end is to be burned." As much as to ſay, Of theſe men who have received great grace from God, and to whom He has ſhowed ſpecial tokens of His ſecret favour, when they are notwithſtanding obſtinately perverſe and unfruitful, it is to be feared, if they perſevere in ſuch a courſe, that they will fall under the eternal curſe of God. Therefore beware that you be not hanged on this croſs of condemnation, and meet your laſt end thus.

come of the number of thoſe of whom Paul ſpeaks in Heb. vi. 4-8.

The ſecond kind of croſs is good, and is that of the malefactor on Chriſt's right hand, who had indeed well deſerved his puniſhment, but it became unto him fruitful and profitable. This croſs we may take as a type of the hardſhip and ſufferings needful to be borne by thoſe who have turned with their whole heart from this

Of the good and fruitful croſs laid upon thoſe who do rightly turn unto God, like the malefactor on

Chriſt's right hand.

world and ſin to a life of repentance; who have indeed well deſerved to ſuffer much for their ſins, becauſe they have waſted their time ſo unprofitably in fleſhly and natural pleaſures, doing their own will; but now they wiſh to forſake all theſe things for God's ſake, and on the contrary to ſuffer whatever God ſhall appoint for them. To theſe the croſs is not only profitable and fruitful, but alſo conſoling, ſweet, and lovely. For to them it brings, as it did to this malefactor, a ſtrong faith with a firm hope in the unſpeakable love and mercy of God. Ah! children, what greater good could befall this criminal hanging on the croſs, in this ſhort ſpace of time, than to hear thoſe comfortable words: "Verily I ſay unto thee, this day "ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe." And what can better comfort theſe rightly diſpoſed converts of whom we are ſpeaking, than for Chriſt to exclaim unto them: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, "and I will give you reſt." That is, I will receive you into my favour, and help you to bear your burdens, and after a ſhort ſeaſon of travail moſt ſweetly quicken and refreſh you.

Luke xxiii. 43.

Matt. xi. 28.

Its depth, boundleſs humility, remembering that this ſuffering is far leſs than their deſerts.

The depth of this croſs is boundleſs humility, not deeming ourſelves higher than other men, but having our eyes always open to our own ſhortcomings; like this malefactor, who acknowledged that he was ſuffering the juſt reward of his miſdeeds. So let it be with all theſe converts; in all their ſorrows let them remember that they might juſtly have ſuffered more, and that no ſuffering on earth or in hell would be a ſufficient retribution for their ſins. This makes them not to deſpiſe, nor judge, nor condemn any but them-

ſelves; and when they are brought to this point, then their croſs begins to bloſſom and bear fruit.

Its height, heavenly aſpirations.

The height of this croſs is a mind directed upwards to the contemplation of divine and heavenly things, and a forſaking of outward things; that is, they ſhall learn to look upward toward eternal things, without letting their eyes wander after earthly things, and fix their looks on the admirable life and walk of our dear Lord, his ſufferings, his bitter death, his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and everlaſting reign. This makes a man's ſuffering and croſs light unto him, as it did to this malefactor when he ſaid: "Lord, remember me when "thou comeſt into thy kingdom." Behold, dear children, how his mind and thoughts were filled with the eternal world.

Luke xxiii. 42.

Its breadth, univerſal love for God and men.

The breadth of this croſs ſignifies a hearty, all-embracing love to God, men, and all creatures; for thoſe who are on this croſs pray with lip and heart, not alone for themſelves, but alſo for all men, even for their enemies: thus their prayer extends unto all, and they are ever ready to devote themſelves, body and ſoul to their fellow-creatures; and thus they do what in them lies to make amends to God, whom they have aforetime diſhonoured and provoked in his creatures. Thus love, as St. Peter ſaith, covereth a multitude of ſins; and, as Chriſt ſaid of Mary Magdalene: many ſins are forgiven her, for ſhe loved much.

Its length, perſeverance in efforts to do good.

The length of this croſs is perſeverance and growth in good works; for theſe men never ceaſe from their kind and virtuous labours, but undertake one after another with juſt diſcrimination, and give all diligence to put off their old man, and to put on a new man

created after God in righteouſneſs and holineſs of life. And hence their inward man is renewed day by day, and groweth up amidſt all their ſorrow, pain, and temptation, ſo that they may well feel how truly Paul has ſaid, that "this light affliction, which is but for "a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and "eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the "things which are ſeen, but at the things which are "not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen are temporal, "but the things which are not ſeen are eternal."

2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

Of the croſs of Chriſt in which the nobleſt men do ſhare.

The third croſs is the croſs of Chriſt, and is a type of the perfect men, on whom their Heavenly Father has beſtowed peculiar glory and honour, and fellowſhip with His only begotten Son, in that He ſends them, after a ſpecial ſort, all manner of contradiction, pain, aſſaults, tribulation, and croſſes of every kind; and gives them to drink of the cup of which Chriſt, His only begotten Son, has drunk. As it was with the holy Apoſtles James and John, to whom Chriſt ſaid: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of? "and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am bap-"tized with?" As much as to ſay, If ye deſire to be the chiefeſt, deareſt friends of God, ye muſt, like me, ſuffer the greateſt contradiction beforehand; for the diſciple is not above his maſter. If Chriſt muſt needs ſuffer and enter by the croſs into the kingdom of His Father, without doubt ſo muſt every friend of God have ſomewhat likewiſe to endure.

Matt. xx. 22.

Its depth, a continual childlike fear of God.

The depth of this croſs is that they have at all times a childlike fear, and allow God to move them as He will, and keep a conſtant care not to offend God. Its height is the well-grounded hope which

they have of eternal bleſſedneſs, not founded on their own merit or good life, but on a firm faith, in a humble principle of entire ſelf-ſurrender to the perfectly holy will of God.) And this hope maketh not aſhamed; but, as St. Paul ſays, "the love of God is "ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto them." The width or breadth of this croſs is that they love God with their whole hearts, and themſelves and all men through God; and endeavour with all their might "to keep the unity of "the ſpirit in the bond of peace." They ſhun all giving of offence and ſcandal, and are uſeful to all and hurtful to none. And therefore they ſuffer gladly all that befalls them in their work of love, that they may bring many ſouls unto God. The length of their croſs ſtretches out into eternity: for they are ready to ſuffer gladly all that God ſhall appoint unto them in time or in eternity; it is their higheſt happineſs to forward all that God chooſes to do through them; however and whenever He will, they ſimply follow His leading, without murmuring or queſtioning. They are thoſe who are able to ſay in ſincerity with Chriſt: "Not my will, but thine be done." Nothing grieves them more than that they cannot utterly give up their own will, by reaſon of human infirmity and weakneſs. O, how bleſſed are theſe men, and how fruitful is their croſs, not only to themſelves, but alſo to all Chriſtendom!

Its height, a well-grounded hope of eternal life.

Its width, a perfect love to God and man. *Eph. iv. 3.*

Its length, a renouncing of their own will to all eternity.

This croſs leads and brings them to the ineffable croſs of the divine nature, of which Paul was thinking when he prayed for his friends that they might "be "able to comprehend with all ſaints what is the

Of the ineffable croſs of the divine nature. *Eph. iii. 18, 19.*

" breadth and length, and depth and height, and to " know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge, " that ye may be filled with all the fulneſs of God." The length is His never-ending eternity; the breadth His boundleſs goodneſs and mercy, which has been ſhed abroad, and is yet poured out over the whole creation and mankind; the height is His omnipotence, and the depth His unfathomable wiſdom. Now he who will reach up unto the croſs of Chriſt's divine nature, muſt firſt be faſhioned into the likeneſs of His crucifixion in the fleſh. And all thoſe who truly lead a life in the ſpirit, ſuch as we have deſcribed, are thus crucified with Chriſt; for they ſhall keep themſelves from all the works of the fleſh, which God hates, and ſhall have an earneſt love to all righteouſneſs, ſo that they are united with the bonds of their ſoul unto His divine nature. They ſhall, moreover, be ever ſtriving to fulfil God's will, continually fixing their thoughts on Him, and keeping themſelves from all that would be diſpleaſing in His ſight, and thus be nailed with the right foot to the croſs of the divine nature; and they ſhall further learn to hold themſelves between theſe two, that they be neither carried away by unbleſſed happineſs, nor yet ſhrink from bleſſed unhappineſs, nor be led aſtray between theſe two; and thus are they bound with the left foot to the croſs of the divine nature. Furthermore, they ſhall have an inward ſympathy with God, for the diſhonour that has been done Him from the beginning of the world, and will yet be done Him by men in the Church and in the world until the last day, and for the ſhame and diſhonour of His deareſt friends, who have yielded

Thoſe who will reach up into this croſs muſt firſt be conformed unto the likeneſs of Chriſt's death.

themſelves to ſuffer on this croſs with Chriſt, that His divine glory may be magnified through them; for God will guard them as the apple of His eye, inſomuch that whoſo entreateth them evil hath done it unto God.

That we may thus be nailed with Chriſt to the croſs of his humanity,—that we may be admitted to the eternal beholding of the brightneſs of His godhead, may the Almighty Trinity grant and help us. Amen!



XI.

Sermon for the Second Sunday in Lent.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

Tells us how God drives forward ſome of His children by the ſtruggle between the inward and outward man.

MATT. XV. 21-28.—"Jeſus went thence and departed into the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon. "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the ſame coaſts, and cried unto Him, "ſaying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievouſly "vexed with a devil. But He anſwered her not a word. And His diſciples came and "beſought Him, ſaying, Send her away, for ſhe crieth after us. But He anſwered and "ſaid, I am not ſent, but unto the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. Then came ſhe and "worſhipped Him, ſaying, Lord, help me. But He anſwered and ſaid, It is not meet to "take the children's bread and to caſt it to dogs. And ſhe ſaid, Truth, Lord; yet the "dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their maſter's table. Then Jeſus anſwered and "ſaid unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And "her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

THE goſpel for this day points us to a guiding principle which is of all others the nobleſt, ſureſt, moſt uſeful and moſt eſſential principle that we can have while here on earth. For be aſſured, that unleſs your converſion have within it this kernel, all your efforts to perform good works and to abſtain from tranſgreſſion will avail you little or nothing.

Jeſus departs from the Scribes and Phariſees.

Now let us in the firſt place conſider theſe words: "Jeſus went out from thence." Whence was it that He departed? From the Scribes and Phariſees. Now give heed to the principle herein contained: the

Scribes were the wiſe men who prided themſelves upon their knowledge; and the Phariſees were thoſe who prided themſelves upon their ſpirituality, and truſted in their religious practices and ſet taſks. Theſe two claſſes of men are types of two of the moſt dangerous principles which can exiſt among religious people; and thoſe who remain in their way of thinking are loſt, for theſe two principles do ruin the ſoul like a worm at the root, ſo that men come to nothing. And yet there are few but what are in ſome meaſure under the influence of one or both of them, though ſome much more than others. By the Scribes we may underſtand men of a reaſoning turn of mind, who try all things by the light of their reaſon, or as they appear to them through their ſenſes. They receive ideas by means of their ſenſes, and then exerciſe upon them their powers of reflection that they may attain to the comprehenſion of high queſtions. And they glory therein, and make very lofty diſcourſes; but in the inward parts, where pure truth ſhould guſh forth from its fount, they are empty and dry, yielding nothing.

who are types of many among ourſelves.

The Scribes thoſe who rely upon knowledge.

The ſecond claſs are the Phariſees. Theſe are the religious people who look upon themſelves as the excellent of the earth, and think highly of themſelves, and take their ſtand upon preſcribed cuſtoms and ways, and regard theſe uſages as of more importance than anything elſe, and deſire to be reſpected on this account and to have praiſe of men; but their hearts are full of judging thoughts of other men who do not obſerve or approve of their ways. From theſe our Lord went out. The Scribes had aſked him to pro-

The Phariſees thoſe who rely upon outward acts of piety.

nounce a judgment, ſaying: Why do thy diſciples tranſgreſs the good cuſtoms of our forefathers, by eating with unwaſhen hands? And He anſwered them: Why do ye tranſgreſs the commandments of God? Juſt ſo do thoſe of the preſent day who regard their own ordinances and practices of devotion as the commandments and will of God, and condemn and think ſlightingly of the friends of God who refuſe to follow uſages of man's preſcribing, becauſe they are conſtrained to follow God's ſecret motions in their hearts. In thus ſaying, we do not mean that open evil-livers or deſpiſers of godlineſs are not to be judged by the congregation, for elſe there would be an end of all eccleſiaſtical diſcipline; but let each beware of this phariſaical temper in himſelf, looking to ſee if any falſe piety lurk within him that has ſome other origin or end than God. For Jeſus departs when that is ſo, and aſſuredly will not ſtay where that exiſts.

Theſe pray and read their Bible while their heart is filled with ſelf inſtead of God.

Thus we find many people who never look to anything beyond their outward conduct; they perform good works and behave with decorum, and then think they have done all; while their inward part is altogether overgrown and choked up with the creature, by which they are held faſt to their great hurt. And while in this ſtate, they pray much and read their Bible. So likewiſe did the blind Jews, they read much in the Scriptures; and yet God was an utter ſtranger to them, and hidden from them in ſpirit and in truth. So it is with this ſort of religious people: they ſubmit to Church diſcipline, they pray, they faſt, they watch; and for all this, God is not really and truly the principle of their life, but poor, miſerable

nature, toward which all their love, and ſtriving, and aſpiration is directed, notwithſtanding the abundance and the fervour of their religious exerciſes. No, children, the eternal God will have nothing to do with theſe Phariſees; for they are not plants which our Heavenly Father has planted, but weeds which muſt be plucked up by the roots, as our Lord Himſelf has ſaid: "He who is not with me is againſt me;" and, "He who gathereth not with me, ſcattereth." When the time of harveſt is come, and the eternal God will gather His wheat into the garner, theſe will be found to be the called who have not gathered with Him, and He will not know them; and where He does not find His planting in the ground of the heart, He will caſt the men out into outer darkneſs. I have ſhown you two falſe principles; I beſeech you, for God's ſake, beware of them, if you would be kept unto eternal life. For this zealous activity of the natural man, after the faſhion of the Scribes or Phariſees, in outward ſhow or preſcribed uſages, prevails greatly, alas! at this day among all ranks. Men's minds are now a-days ſo ſubtle and quick, after the faſhion of theſe Scribes [raiſing doubts and queſtions of conſcience], that a conſcientious confeſſor ſcarcely knows how to direct their ſouls by reaſon of their ſubtlety or their ſcrupulouſneſs. From ſuch men Jeſus departed, as He does ſtill to this day.

How the Lord went out to Tyre and Sidon, which are types of the inward ſtrug-

But whither did the Lord Jeſus go? He went into the land of Tyre and Sidon. Now Tyre ſignifies a ſtate of apprehenſion, and Sidon ſignifies the ſtate of one driven by the hunters. Ah, children! few, alas! are willing to experience in themſelves what it

gle between the fleſh and the ſpirit in the children of God.

is to go thither; and yet it is a wondrously ennobling and profitable thing that theſe two trials ſhould be laid upon a man together; and if under them he can act rightly and well, what nobleneſs, growth in grace, and good fruit will be born of this ſharp tribulation! Now what is this being hard preſſed by the hunters? Nothing elſe but that the inward man would always fain be with God (who is his proper reſting-place); and thus it ever drives the outward man towards and after God; but the outward man ſtrives in the contrary direction, always going outwards after lower things, where indeed is his proper place; and thus there is a diviſion in the man. The inward man's own place is God, and towards this centre all his deſire, and free-will, and endeavours are turned; and he is continually called and drawn this way by God his Lord. But this is contrary to the outward man, by his very nature, which wars againſt it every day and hour. As St. Paul ſays: "For I delight in the law of God after "the inward man: but I ſee another law in my "members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and "bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin which "is in my members." Wherefore, "the good that I "would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, "that I do." Thus the fleſh and the ſpirit ſtrive and fight againſt each other; and then cometh God from above, and purſues after them both with His grace. And where this is rightly and duly underſtood, it ſtands well with the man; for all who are thus led by God's ſpirit, are the children of God.

Rom. vii. 22, 23. 19.

Of the painfulneſs of this ſtruggle.

Now this conflict cauſes to the man ſharp and bitter pain and tribulation. But while he is plunged in

the thick of the ſtrife, perceiving nothing beyond it, and deſtitute of conſolation, then comes Jeſus and enters in of a ſurety. And to the man who does not obey the ſtrivings of God's ſpirit, nor experience this inward conflict, Jeſus does not enter in. For all thoſe who have never felt this inward ſtrife, nor God's hand heavy on their ſoul, and truly yielded to it in their life, theſe will never bring any good to paſs ſo long as they live. Moreover, they never come to themſelves, and therefore know nothing of all that is lying hidden within them. For many aſſaults come upon us, both carnal and ſpiritual, which we can beſt withſtand by meeting them with a ſpirit of humility and gratitude; and if we await theſe trials with a cheerful ſpirit, we may be aſſured that God will ſtand by us with His grace. And then, when the world comes with its raging ſtorms, beating upon his head, and the Devil with his crafty wiles, and the man's own fleſh and ſenſes and loweſt powers are beſet with great weakneſs and paſſionate impulſes towards outward things, and all this while the inward man is urged on by God, and by the thirſt which he by nature has after God,—then, indeed, there muſt needs be within him a bitter agony and tearing ſtrife. And what ſhall the poor wretched, comfortleſs man do, hunted and aſſailed as he is, without way or means of eſcape? He ſhall do as this poor woman did; go to Jeſus and cry with the loud voice of ſtrong deſire: "O, Lord, thou ſon of David, have mercy on me!" And then from the depths of the ſtruggle an impetuous cry leaps forth; and this cry of the ſpirit flies over thouſands and thouſands of miles with its piercing

How to meet aſſaults.

Of the deep ſighing of the ſpirit,

call: it is an infinite ſighing from the fathomleſs abyſs. This is ſomething far above nature, whereunto the Holy Spirit muſt ſupply what is lacking becauſe of our infirmities: as St. Paul ſays: "The Spirit "maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which can- "not be uttered." And by theſe means the Holy Spirit doth better prepare the ground of the heart than by any other preparation on earth that can be imagined.

Rom. viii. 26.

when God makes as though He heard not the prayer of the contrite.

And when a man is thus hunted and plunged into the bottomleſs pit of temptation and ſuffering, and then, amidſt "groanings which cannot be uttered," cries to God with a loud voice, ſo that the accents of his ſtrong deſire pierce through the heavens; and yet God makes as though He did not hear, or would not liſten, O, how utterly muſt the man yield up his own ſelf, and ſuffer his wiſhes to melt into the depths of God's will, waiting with ever-ſtrengthening patience upon God, till His appointed time come to viſit him and all creatures! For, oh! how impoſſible were it that the fount of all mercy ſhould be ſealed up! yet, when this woman came crying after Jeſus with a loud voice, the ſtream from this fount of mercy was not ſuffered to flow out unto her. The diſciples prayed that it might be opened; and at laſt, with ſevere aſpect and harſh words, Jeſus answered them that He was not ſent save to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael, ſaying: "It is not meet to take "the children's bread and to caſt it to the dogs." He not only refuſed her the bleſſing ſhe ſought, but did what was much harder to bear,—proved in clear, cutting language that it was reaſonable and juſt that

He ſhould do ſo. He not only refuſed to give her bread, which is neceſſary to life, and a common bleſſing, but denied her the name of a child, thus depriving her of humanity, and called her a dog. Could our Lord have tried her by a harder, ſharper teſt, — could He have preſſed her harder, or overwhelmed her more completely? But what does ſhe do in this her diſtreſs and anguiſh? She takes it all meekly and patiently, and ſuffers herſelf to be driven and buffeted as He will. Nay, ſhe ſinks much lower than He had plunged her, and caſts herſelf into the very depths of humiliation, ſaying: "No, Lord, not a dog, but even "leſs, one of the leaſt of the little whelps." But in her ſelf-abaſement and ſelf-annihilation ſhe holds faſt her confidence, and ſays: "Yet, O Lord, the little "whelps are wont to be fed and ſatisfied with the "crumbs that fall from their maſter's table."

Of true ſelf-knowledge.

Oh, how bleſſed and holy were men who could thus ſtrike into the very truth of things, and ſee themſelves with the mind of God, not through figures of ſpeech, or cuſtomary phraſes, or as the world judges. Neither God nor all His creatures could then abaſe and annihilate them ſo thoroughly as they would abaſe, and accuſe, and annihilate themſelves in the ſight of the truth! Bleſſed indeed, if then, notwithſtanding this wretched tumult of ſuffering and humiliation, they ſhould be conſtant in their hope and confidence in the goodneſs of God, and abide therein without wavering; ſo that under all theſe afflictions their deſire and earneſt purpoſe towards Him ſhould ſtrengthen more and more, as it was with this woman. However harſhly our Lord

How that if we have a conſtant deſire towards God and truſt in His mercy,

He will assuredly hear our prayer at the last.

ſpoke to her, and denied her His acts of mercy, yet ſhe never let go her truſt in His grace. Therefore everything was granted to her that ſhe had ſought and deſired of the Lord. Dear children, this is the right, true, godly way unto eternal truth. Oh! this way leads unto the truth; this alone leads ſtraight to God without a means. And ſome have not ſtrength to try the depth of this fathomleſs annihilation of ſelf. This was the way the woman of Canaan took, and ſhe received at last the bleſſed anſwer: "O, woman, "great is thy faith; be it unto thee according to thy "will!"

Children, I tell you of God's truth, that to every man who ſhall be found really and truly thus walking in this way, God will aſſuredly one day declare: "My beloved friend, whatſoever thou chooſeſt or "deſireſt, it ſhall be done unto thee according to "thy will; foraſmuch as thou haſt willingly given "up all that was thine. Therefore, thy will is "ſwallowed up in mine, and thou haſt become one "with me by grace, and a partaker of my nature." Now this becoming one with the eternal Goodneſs cannot come to paſs but by an abſolute renunciation of our Self, and all that is ours, natural or ſpiritual; for in the ſame meaſure that a man comes out from himſelf, in that meaſure does God enter in with His divine grace, and he who loſeth his life ſhall find it.

A ſtory of a certain woman,

Children, I will ſay no more now, but tell you a little ſtory that is very apt to our purpoſe. I knew a "woman of Canaan," well deſerving of the name. What I am about to tell you, happened within theſe four years, and ſhe is yet living. This woman loſt

her ſenſes, and fell into a trance, and was borne up on high, till ſhe came into the preſence of God, and beheld our Lady and all the ſaints. And as ſhe looked upon this viſion ſhe ſaw herſelf to be at an immeaſurable diſtance from God. Then her ſpirit was ſeized with ſuch unutterable woe that it ſeemed as if ſhe muſt periſh that moment with the bitter, ſmarting, helliſh pain that it gave her to ſee herſelf ſo far off from God. (For know ye that this is the worſt torment which the ſouls in hell have to endure, that they know themſelves to be afar off, and utterly parted from God and all His elect, and know that it will laſt for ever, and that they ſhall never ſee God.) Now in this unſpeakable diſtreſs ſhe turned to our Lady and all the ſaints, and beſought them all that they would intercede for her. But then ſhe ſaw that the bleſſed ſaints were ſo utterly loſt in the contemplation of God that none of them for a moment liſtened to her cries and appeals. In their overwhelming bliſs and joy they never even heard her voice. Then ſhe turned after a human faſhion to the ſacred ſorrow and bitter death of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and it was anſwered her, why ſhould ſhe appeal to that to which ſhe had never ſhown due honour and reverence? But when ſhe saw that neither our Lady, nor the ſaints, nor the ſufferings of our Lord brought her help, ſhe turned herſelf with all earneſtneſs to God, and ſaid: "Ah, Lord! ſince none will come to my "help, behold, O beloved Lord, that I am Thy poor "creature, and Thou art my God; I fall down before "Thy righteous ſentence, according to Thy moſt "bleſſed will; and whether Thou wilt have me to

who had a heavenly viſion.

" remain for ever in this horrible, helliſh torment, I " leave, dear Lord, altogether to Thy moſt bleſſed " will." But when ſhe had thus utterly ſurrendered herſelf to God for all eternity, that moment ſhe was lifted up far away beyond all intervening things, and wafted into the abyſs of God's love. O what a glorious abyſs is that! This ſame perſon is ſtill often brought either into this ſtate of mind, or carried into the abyſs of the divine love. She is a young maiden, and I firmly believe that ſhe had never in her life committed any groſs ſins, wherewith ſhe had provoked God; and yet ſhe needed thus to ſuffer. Children! how great and manifold, then, muſt be the pangs of thoſe who have often and deeply angered God, and withal are ſtill cleaving while on earth ſo cloſely to the miſerable creature delights? But this maiden reſigned herſelf humbly to the will of God, content to bear an eternity of pain in hell, if God in His righteouſneſs ſaw fit to condemn her thereunto.

What this ſtory teaches us.

How unlike this woman are thoſe who fancy that in four or five years they ſhall work wonders, and ſay to others: " Ah, my dear friend, pray the Lord for " me that I may become one of his deareſt friends." Now know that, if thou wert in the right way, thou wouldſt never think thyſelf worthy to become one of the leaſt of the friends of God; therefore ſet thyſelf humbly in the loweſt place, as the Goſpel teaches, and then thou wilt be bidden to come up higher. But thoſe who lift themſelves up, God will aſſuredly caſt down. Wherefore beſeech Him that His good pleaſure may be wrought in and with thee, according to His ever-bleſſed will, and ſo wilt thou find thy dwelling-

Of thoſe who are in haſte to attain to high things in a ſpiritual life without knowing what that involves.

place and reſt in Him, and not elſe. Children, on this wiſe God entereth into the ſoul immediately, without a veil; that is, when a man wholly renounces Self —all that he has. Now, if any man while here on earth ſhould obtain one drop of this bleſſing, and one ſpark of this love ſhould be kindled in his ſoul, he would be more truly and really made fit for God's dwelling, and led farther into the truth, than if he were to ſtrip all the clothes off his body and give them to the poor, or to macerate his fleſh with penances. One moment in this ſtate were more worth living than forty years ſpent in doing and leaving undone what we pleaſed. Moreover this would be the nobleſt and ſhorteſt, and alſo the eaſieſt, of all courſes that reaſon can conceive. O God! with what things are men taken up, while they waſte this precious, bleſſed ſeaſon of grace, and come ſhort of that pure, exalted good which might and ought unceaſingly to be wrought in them; and ſo the long years roll ſlowly by, and they are as one in a ſleep, never coming any farther, unſtirred by God's grace; and after the many years that they have lived, they are as far from true perfectneſs as the firſt day that they ſet out. This is indeed a terrible and awful thought for all religious perſons; for if they knew the great and perilous injury that they do to their ſouls with their own devices, their very marrow and blood would dry up within their body. Now let us pray God that we may thus ſink into the divine abyſs, and fall down before God's ſentence, that we may be alſo found in Him like this woman of Canaan! Amen!

How that one ſpark of ſelf-renouncing love teaches more than all outward exerciſes.

Of our awful waſte of precious time.

XII.

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

Of the power of the Word of God, of fiery deſires, and the eſſence of ſelf-renunciation.

John viii. 47.—"He who is of God heareth the words of God."

How that we ought not to lower our ſtandard becauſe we fall far below it.

DEAR children, ye ought not to ceaſe from hearing or declaring the word of God becauſe you do not alway live according to it, nor keep it in mind. For inaſmuch as you love it and crave after it, it will aſſuredly be given unto you; and you ſhall enjoy it for ever with God, according to the meaſure of your deſire after it. There are ſome people who, when they hear ſpeak of high things which they do not underſtand, and moreover ſee that they have no ſhare in them, turn away from theſe things with ſuch averſion, that they do not even like to hear them treated of, or that others ſhould think about them and ſeek after them. Yea, they hear of high things, and ſay: "That is not my way of thinking; I had better "not try to put it into practice, for I ſhould not keep "it, and then I ſhould be juſt where I was before." And thus they turn away themſelves and others from the truth, juſt as if it in no wiſe concerned them, and ſit down quite contented with their own ways, while

yet they know in the bottom of their hearts that their ways are not the beſt that might be. This is an infallible token that theſe perſons will never reach the higheſt point of which they are capable; nor will they become partakers of the higheſt, pure, abſolute goodneſs, unleſs indeed they come to go through a painful and agonizing ſtruggle after it.

St. Bernard has ſaid: "Man, if thou deſireſt a "noble and holy life, and unceaſingly prayeſt to God "for it, if thou continue conſtant in this thy deſire, it "will be granted unto thee without fail, even if only "in the day or hour of thy death; and if God ſhould "not give it thee then, thou ſhalt find it in Him in "eternity: of this be aſſured." Therefore do not relinquiſh your deſire, though it be not fulfilled immediately, or though ye may ſwerve from your aſpirations, or even forget them for a time. It were a hard caſe if this were to cut you off for ever from the end of your being. But when ye hear the word of God, ſurrender yourſelves wholly to it, as if for eternity, with a full purpoſe of will to retain it in your mind and to order your life according to it; and let it ſink down right deep into your heart as into an eternity. If afterward it ſhould come to paſs that you let it ſlip, and never think of it again, yet the love and aſpiration which once really exiſted live for ever before God, and in Him ye ſhall find the fruit thereof; that is, to all eternity it ſhall be better for you than if you had never felt them.

For if our deſire towards goodneſs be conſtant, it will be granted to us to attain thereunto here or hereafter.

What we can *do* is a ſmall thing; but we can will and aſpire to great things. Thus, if a man cannot be great, he can yet be good in will; and what he, with

Our aſpirations muſt never be bounded by

the meaſure of our ability to perform good works.

his whole heart and mind, love and deſire, wills to be, that without doubt he moſt truly is. It is little we can bring to paſs; but our will and deſire may be large. Nay, they may grow till they loſe themſelves in the infinite abyſs of God. Not that we ought to think within ourſelves that we wiſh to be this or that, like ſuch a ſaint or angel, for we ought to be much more than we can conceive or fathom: wherefore our part is to give ourſelves over to God, and leave ourſelves utterly in His hands, being wholly His. And if ye cannot be as entirely His as ye fain would be, be His as much as ye may attain unto; but whatever ye are, be that truly and entirely; and what ye cannot be, that be contented not to be, in a ſincere ſpirit of reſignation, for God's ſake and in Him. So ſhall you peradventure poſſeſs more of God in lacking than in having. Therefore be God's; yield to His hand, ſuffer Him to do in thee, and to thee, and with thee, what He will; and then nothing here or hereafter ſhall be able to confound you.

How God trains up His children to act for themſelves,

Think not that God will be always careſſing His children, or ſhine upon their head, or kindle their hearts, as He does at the firſt. He does ſo only to lure us to Himſelf, as the falconer lures the falcon with its gay hood. Our Lord works with His children ſo as to teach them afterwards to work themſelves; as He bade Moſes to make the tables of ſtone after the pattern of the firſt which He had made Himſelf. Thus, after a time, God allows a man to depend upon himſelf, and no longer enlightens, and ſtimulates, and rouſes him. We muſt ſtir up and rouſe ourſelves, and be content to leave

off learning, and no more enjoy feeling and fire, and muſt now ſerve the Lord with ſtrenuous induſtry and at our own coſt. Our Lord acts like a prudent father, who, while His children are young, lets them live at His coſt, and manages everything for them. What is needful for them, He provides, and lets them go and play; and ſo long as this laſts they are at leiſure, free from care, happy, and generous at their father's expenſe. Afterwards he gives a portion of his eſtate into their own hands, becauſe he will have them to take care of themſelves, and earn their own living, to leave off childiſh play, and thus learn how to grow rich. So it is with us. In the beginning of a holy life, there is nothing but brightneſs, enjoyment, and feeling, and God draws us after Him with His gifts, that we may praiſe Him in the influencing of our wills, and we do all with a good will, and we know and recognize therein God's will. But now it is very different; now God will have us to give up ourſelves and our own will, and to accept Him with readineſs in His acts of ſeverity, and in all kinds of ſuffering, and in darkneſs of mind, whatever He may do, and however contrary it may be to all our natural wiſhes. As the Lord ſaid to Peter: "When thou "waſt young, thou girdedſt thyſelf, and walkedſt "whither thou wouldeſt; but when thou ſhalt be old, "thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hand, and another ſhall "gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt "not." Thus did the Lord in our early days go beſide us, drawing us onward by His benefits; then we went whither we would, for our will was ſweetly girded with the pleaſantneſs of divine things. But now

like a judicious father.

John xxi. 18.

How that the Lord's prophecy unto Peter,

it muſt be otherwiſe: another ſhall gird us, and lead us whither we would not.

is ſpiritually fulfilled in us His children.

The Lord will draw us and ſecurely lead us to Himſelf, in a way contrary to all our natural will, until He have diveſted us thereof, and conſumed it and made it thoroughly ſubject unto the Divine will. For this is His will: that we ſhould ceaſe to regard our own wiſhes or diſlikes; that it ſhould become a light matter to us whether He give or take away, whether we have abundance or ſuffer want, and let all things go, if only we may receive and apprehend God Himſelf; that whether things pleaſe or diſpleaſe us, we may leave all things to take their courſe and cleave to Him alone. Then firſt do we attain to the fulneſs of God's love as His children, when it is no longer happineſs or miſery, proſperity or adverſity, that draws us to Him, or keeps us back from Him. What we ſhould then experience none can utter; but it would be ſomething far better than when we were burning with the firſt flame of love, and had great emotion but leſs true ſubmiſſion: for here, though there may be leſs ſhow of zeal, and leſs vehemence of feeling, there is more true faithfulneſs to God. That we may attain thereunto, may God help us with His grace. Amen!

How that ſubmiſſion is nobler than flaming zeal.

XIII.

Sermon for Palm Sunday.

How a man ought in all His works to regard God alone, and purely to make Him his end without anything of his own, and ſhall freely and ſimply perform all theſe works for the glory of God only, and not ſeek his own, nor deſire nor expect any reward. Wherewith he may do ſuch works without any ſelf-appropriation or reference to time and number, before or after, and without modes. How the Divine Word ſpeaks and reveals itſelf in the ſoul, all in a lofty and ſubtile ſenſe.

MATT. xxi. 10-17.—"And when He was come into Jeruſalem, all the city was moved, "ſaying, Who is this? And the multitude ſaid, This is Jeſus, the Prophet of Nazareth "of Galilee. And Jeſus went into the temple of God, and caſt out all them that ſold and "bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of "them that ſold doves: And ſaid unto them, It is written, My houſe ſhall be called the "houſe of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame "came to Him in the temple; and He healed them. And when the chief prieſts and "ſcribes ſaw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and "ſaying, Hoſanna to the Son of David, they were ſore diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto Him, "Heareſt thou what theſe ſay? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, "Out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings Thou haſt perfected praiſe? And He left "them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there."

How that our Lord will have the temple of the ſoul empty, for Him to dwell alone therein.

WE read in the holy Goſpel how that our Lord went into the Temple, and drove out thoſe who were buying and ſelling therein, and ſaid to thoſe who ſold doves: "Take theſe things hence." Herewith He ſignified nought elſe but that He would have the temple

empty; juſt as if He had ſaid: "I have a right to "this temple, and will dwell there alone, and have "the ſole rule therein." Now what is this temple of which God is minded to have poſſeſſion even by force, and to rule according to His own will? It is the ſoul of man, which He has created and faſhioned ſo truly in His own likeneſs; as we read that God ſaid: "Let "us make man after our image." And He has done ſo too, and made the ſoul of man ſo like Himſelf, that there is nothing in heaven or on earth ſo like Himſelf as that is. For which reaſon God will have this temple to be empty, that nothing be there but He alone; and the cauſe why this temple pleaſes Him ſo well, is that it is ſo like Himſelf, and He loveth to be in it foraſmuch as He is there alone.

What ſort of people are typified by thoſe who bought and ſold in the temple.

Now mark, who were the people who were buying and ſelling, and whom do they repreſent at this day? Now obſerve, I intend to ſpeak only of the good people who thus bought and ſold, and yet whom our Lord ſcourged and drove out, and do not mean to ſay anything to-day concerning open ſinners, who knowingly live in the commiſſion of deadly ſins. And the Lord does the ſame now a-days to all who buy and ſell in His temple, for ſuch He will not ſuffer to remain therein. Behold, dear children, all thoſe are traders who keep themſelves from open ſins, and would fain be good people, and do their works to the glory of God, and perform many good works, ſuch as faſting, watching, praying, and the like; yet do it all in order that our Lord may give them, or do for them, ſomething that they wiſh, and thus they ſeek themſelves in all things. All ſuch are traders; that is, to ſpeak

in vulgar language, they wiſh to give one thing in exchange for another, and would fain thus drive a traffic with our Lord; and they are deceived in their bargain, for all that they poſſeſs or are able to perform they have received from God, and conſequently God does not owe them anything in return, nor is He bound to do anything for them, except, indeed, He would do it of His free bounty. What they are, they are of God; and what they become, they have received of God and not from themſelves; therefore God owes them nothing in return for their works and their gifts, unleſs He do it of His own pleaſure, of His grace, and not for the ſake of their works and gifts; for they have nothing of their own to give, they do not even do their good works of their own power; as Chriſt ſaid: "Without me ye can do "nothing!" Thoſe who would thus bargain with our Lord are thick-headed and ignorant men, who have little or no inſight into the truth, wherefore God ſcourges them and drives them out of the temple. Light and darkneſs cannot dwell together. God is the Truth and Light in Himſelf; when, therefore, He cometh into His temple, He drives out of it ignorance and darkneſs, and reveals Himſelf with light and truth. Then when the truth is perceived, the buyers and ſellers are gone; and the truth will have nothing to do with trafficking. God does not ſeek His own; all His works are done voluntarily and in ſingleneſs of purpoſe: He does them for very love. So likewiſe is it with the man who is united with God: his works alſo are done voluntarily and in ſingleneſs of mind, and he does them for love without any wherefore—

Of traffickers with God,

whoſe expectations will be deceived.

God does all His works for love, and ſo muſt the man who would be united with Him.

that is, without any regard to himſelf—to the glory of God only, and ſeeketh not his own in them; and God works them through him.

I ſay further, ſo long as a man in any of his works is ſeeking or deſiring anything that God has to give, or will give hereafter, he is like theſe traffickers. But if thou wouldſt be quite pure from ſuch a mercenary ſpirit, thou muſt do thy utmoſt in good works ſimply for the praiſe of God, and ſhalt ſtand apart from it all, as if thou hadſt not done it; thou ſhalt aſk nothing in return. If thou doeſt thy works in this ſpirit, then are they godly and ſpiritual. And then the buyers and ſellers are altogether driven out of the temple, and God alone dwelleth there, when thou purpoſeſt nothing but what God purpoſeth.

Of thoſe who are ſignified by the money-changers,

Now mark, there is yet a higher ſtate than that of the traders, which is indicated to us in this Goſpel; namely, that of the men who perform their works with a ſincerely good intent, and yet are hindered from coming to the cloſeſt union with God, inaſmuch as they ſtill carry on ſome traffic and converſe with the creatures, and are thus like the money-changers and thoſe who ſold doves, whoſe tables and ſeats the Lord overthrew. For although this their occupation was at firſt begun by certain of them with a good intent, it was an unſeemly practice, and was afterwards turned to the greateſt abuſes of covetouſneſs, rather than to the ſervice of God. So likewiſe it is with the perſons of whom I am ſpeaking; for although their intent is good, and they do their good works ſincerely for God's ſake, and do not ſeek their own therein, yet nevertheleſs they do them with ſelf-

appropriation, with time and number, with images and reference to before and after. By these things they are hindered from coming to the best and highest truth; for they ought to keep themselves free and empty of all that is accidental, from pleasure and pain, even as our Lord is free and alone, and receiveth Himself ever afresh, without interval or time, from His Heavenly Father, and in the same Now is ever without ceasing begotten afresh in perfectness, with thankful praise, into the Majesty of the Father, in coequal dignity. In like manner must the man who desireth to perceive the highest truth, and to live therein without before or after, and without let or hindrance from any of the outward acts or mental images with which he has ever been conversant, stand free and alone in this eternal Now. He shall simply receive the gift of God, and bring it forth again and render it up to God without let or hindrance, in His light, and with thankful praise through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus he will have done with all the doves and money-changing; that is, with all the hindrance and qualification which arises from those works which are good in themselves, but in which a man seeks something of his own. For which cause also the Lord would not suffer any to carry vessels to and fro in the temple, as St. Mark tells us; all which has to do with the same principle — that a spiritual man must keep himself free and aloof from all objects that would hinder his advance towards perfectness.

being hindered by mixed motives in their good works.

Now when the temple is thus cleared of all that blocks it up, *i. e.* of all selfishness and ignorance, it shines forth in such beauty, and is so bright and re-

Of the beauty of the temple when it is cleared of all but God.

ſplendent above all elſe that God has created, that nothing can outſhine it ſave the uncreated God alone. Nothing even that belongs to angelic exiſtence can be compared to this temple. The higheſt angels do indeed in many reſpects reſemble the temple of a noble ſoul, yet not wholly, for there is ſome meaſure, a certain bound, ſet to their ſimilarity to it in knowledge and love, beyond which they cannot paſs; but the ſoul is ever able to advance ſo long as it is in time. For if the ſoul of a man yet living in this preſent ſtate were on a level with the higheſt angel, the man could yet, by virtue of his free ſelf-determination, outſtrip the angel at every ſucceſſive moment, without count, that is to ſay without mode, and above the mode of the angels, and all created reaſon. God is alone free and uncreated; and therefore He alone is equal to the ſoul as touching freedom, and unequal as touching uncreatedneſs, for the ſoul is created. But when the ſoul enters into the unmixed light, ſhe, with her created I, ſinks ſo deeply into her own nothingneſs, that ſhe cannot by her own power regain the ſenſe of her ſeparate exiſtence as a creature. But God upholds her with His uncreated power, and keeps the ſoul ſtill herſelf. The ſoul has dared to become naught; and yet ſhe cannot attain thereunto of her own power, ſo entirely is ſhe loſt until God upholds her with His power. It muſt needs be ſo, ſeeing that, as I ſaid before, Jeſus entered into the temple of God, and caſt out thoſe who bought and ſold therein, and began to ſpeak in the temple.

How that none muſt

Now, dear children, know of a truth, if any one elſe would fain ſpeak in the temple, that is in the ſoul,

except Jeſus alone, He holds His peace, as if He were not there; and in truth He is not at home in the ſoul, for ſhe has ſtrange gueſts with whom ſhe deſireth to hold converſe. But if Jeſus is to ſpeak in the ſoul, ſhe muſt be alone, and muſt be ſilent herſelf that ſhe may hear the voice of Jeſus; and then He enters in and begins to ſpeak. What does He ſpeak? He ſpeaks that He is. And what is He then? He is the Word of the Father; in which Word the Father utters Himſelf, and all the divine nature, and all that God is, ſo that, in that He perceiveth it, He alſo is it, and He is perfect in His perception and in His power. Hence He is perfect through this His ſpeaking, for when He uttereth this Word, He uttereth Himſelf and all things in another perſon, and giveth that perſon the ſame nature which He Himſelf has, and ſpeaks all rational ſpirits into being in that Word, in the likeneſs of the ſame Word, according to the type or pattern which abideth continually in Him. And thus the Word ſhines forth in man, according as each word exiſts in God. Yet is he not in all reſpects like this ſame eſſential Word; but rather the poſſibility is granted to him of receiving a certain likeneſs by the grace of this Word, and of receiving the Word as it is in itſelf. This all has the Father Himſelf ſpoken through the Word, and all that is in the Word.

ſpeak in the ſoul ſave Jeſus, elſe will He hold His peace.

Of that which He ſpeaketh.

Here the queſtion might be aſked, If the Father hath ſpoken this, in what ſenſe doth Jeſus ſpeak in the ſoul? Here remember, dear children, what I have ſaid of the manner of His ſpeaking, namely, that He revealeth Himſelf and all that the Father

hath uttered in Him, according to the meaſure of the ſoul's ability to receive it.

He declareth the Power of the Father,

In the firſt place He reveals the Father's ſovereignty to the ſoul, by declaring His changeleſs, infinite Power. And when through the Son the ſoul hath experience of this power, it becomes ſtrong and mighty in whatever happens, ſo that it grows powerful and ſteadfaſt in all virtues and in perfect ſingleneſs of mind, ſo that neither weal nor woe, nor any or all of the things that God has created in time, have power to ſtir him, for that he has firm and abiding footing in the ſtrength of God, againſt which all things are weak and unavailing.

the Wiſdom of the Son,

In the ſecond place, the Lord reveals Himſelf in the ſoul with an infinite Wiſdom, which He Himſelf is. In this Wiſdom the Father perceiveth Himſelf, with all His Fatherly ſovereignty. And that ſame Word which is alſo Wiſdom, and all that it comprehends, is all the ſame, ſole Unity. When this Wiſdom is united with the ſoul, all doubt and error and darkneſs utterly vaniſh away, and ſhe is tranſported into a pure light, which is God Himſelf. As the prophet ſays: "Lord "in Thy light ſhall we ſee light." That is to ſay: "Lord in Thy light ſhall we perceive the light in the "ſoul." Then is God perceived in the ſoul by means of God. Then does ſhe, by means of this Wiſdom, perceive herſelf and all things, and perceiveth this Wiſdom itſelf, and through it ſhe perceiveth the Father's majeſty, and His eſſential ſelf-exiſtence in ſimple oneneſs, without diſtinction.

and the Love of the Holy Ghoſt.

In the third place, Chriſt reveals Himſelf alſo with an infinite Love, ſweetneſs and richneſs flowing forth

from the power of the Holy Ghoſt, overflowing and ſtreaming in a very flood of richneſs and ſweetneſs into the heart that is waiting to receive it; and with this ſweetneſs He not only reveals Himſelf to the ſoul, but unites Himſelf with her. Through this ſweetneſs, the ſoul in its eſſence by grace flows out with power above all creatures back into her firſt origin and fount. Then is the outward man obedient unto the inward man, even unto death, and liveth in conſtant peace in the ſervice of God continually. That the Lord may thus come into our ſouls alſo, overthrowing and caſting out all hindrances, bodily or ſpiritual, that we may become one here on earth, and hereafter in the kingdom of heaven, may He help us evermore. Amen.

XIV.

Sermon for Thurſday in Eaſter Week.

How we ought to love God, and how Chriſt is a Maſter of the Eternal Good, wherefore we ought to love Him above all things; a Maſter of the Higheſt Truth, wherefore we ought to contemplate Him; and a Maſter of the Higheſt Perfectneſs, wherefore we ought to follow after Him without let or hindrance.

JOHN XX. 16.—"She turned herſelf and ſaid unto Him, Rabboni; which is to ſay, Maſter."

How that our Lord appeared unto Mary Magdalene after His reſurrection.

WHEN our Lord had riſen from the dead, Mary Magdalene deſired with her whole heart to behold our bleſſed Lord; and he revealed Himſelf to her in the form of a gardener, and ſo ſhe did not know Him. Then our Lord ſaid unto her "Mary;" and with that word ſhe knew Him, and ſaid, Rabboni! that is to ſay, Maſter.

Wherefore He hid Himſelf from her at firſt.

Now mark, ſo long as Mary ſtood by the grave looking at the angels, Chriſt ſtood behind her, concealing Himſelf from her. For the Lord our God hideth Himſelf from thoſe who are full of care about the creatures, and grieving over the loſs of earthly things and creatures; but as ſoon as man turns from the creatures to find God, God reveals Himſelf unto the ſoul. Thus, when Mary turned to the grave of Chriſt, it was ſaid unto her, "Mary," which name

ſignifies a ſtar of the ſea, a queen of the world, and one who is illuminated by the Holy Spirit. He who deſireth to ſee God, muſt be as a ſtar in the firmament, ſevered from and ſpurning all the things of time, and illuminated to ſee all heavenly things.

But when ſhe knew Him, called Him "Maſter!"

When ſhe heard the word that Chriſt ſpoke, "Mary," ſhe knew our Lord, and ſaid, Rabboni, which is to ſay, Maſter; for ſhe and His other diſciples and followers commonly addreſs Him with this title, as He ſays: "Ye call me Maſter and Lord, and "ye ſay well, for ſo I am." For He is truly a Maſter of the Higheſt Good, and therefore ſhould we love Him above all things. He is a Maſter of Truth, and therefore ſhould we contemplate Him. He is a Maſter of the Higheſt Perfectneſs, and therefore ſhould we follow Him without any looking backwards behind us.

How that Chriſt is a Maſter of the Higheſt Good.

He is (as I ſaid firſt) a Maſter of the Higheſt Good, and therefore ſhould we love Him above all things. Now, thou mighteſt ſay, "God is infinite, a ſupreme "Good without limits, and the ſoul and all creatures "are finite and bounded; how, then, can the ſoul love "and know God?" Hearken: God is infinite and without end, but the ſoul's deſire is an abyſs which cannot be filled except by a Good which is infinite; and the more ardently the ſoul longeth after God, the more ſhe wills to long after Him; for God is a Good without drawback, and a well of living water without bottom, and the ſoul is made in the image of God, and therefore it is created to know and love God. So, becauſe Chriſt is a Maſter of the Higheſt Good, the ſoul ought to love Him above all things; for He is love, and from Him doth love flow into us,

as out of a well of life. The well of life is love; and he who dwelleth not in love is dead, as St. John ſays in his Epiſtle. Now, foraſmuch as Chriſt is a well-ſpring and Maſter of the Higheſt Good, therefore ſhall the ſoul love Him without reſiſtance. For it is her property that ſhe muſt love that which is God; and therefore muſt ſhe love that which is the Higheſt Good, without meaſure, without rival, and without ceaſing to utter forth His praiſe.

Wherefore we ſhould love Him without meaſure,

Without meaſure ſhall the ſoul love God; concerning which St. Bernard ſays: "The cauſe where-"fore the ſoul ſhall love God, is God; but the meaſure "of this love is without meaſure, for God is an immea-"ſurable Good, becauſe His benefits are without num-"ber or end: wherefore the ſoul ſhall love God with-"out meaſure." Hence St. Paul ſays: "I pray God "that your love may increaſe and abound yet more "and more." And St. Bernard ſays: "In our love "to God we have no rule nor direction to obſerve, "but that we love Him as He hath loved us. He "hath loved us unto the end that we might love "Him world without end. Therefore, our inward "deſire ought ever to increaſe ſo long as we are here on "earth; but although the inward work of our love to "God ought ever to increaſe, yet the outward works "of love ought to be meted out with due wiſdom, "that we ſo exerciſe ourſelves as not to injure nature, "but to ſubdue it unto the ſpirit."

without a rival,

In the ſecond place, the ſoul ſhall love God without a fellow; that is to ſay, in that *degree* of love with which the ſoul loveth God, ſhall no creature ſtand; and all whom the ſoul loves, ſhe ſhall love in God

and to God. Furthermore, ſhe ſhall love the creatures for God's ſake, to God and in God. She loves them for God's ſake, when ſhe loves them for that cauſe which is God; ſhe loves them to God, when ſhe loveth them for that goodneſs which is God; ſhe loves them in God, when ſhe ſeeks no other delight nor end in them but God; and thus ſhe loveth the creatures in God, and God in the creatures. Hence Chriſt tells us: "Thou ſhalt love God with all thy "heart, with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind," which words are thus expounded by St. Auguſtine: "Our Lord ſaith that we are to love God with all our "heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our mind, to "the intent that man ſhould have no ſingle faculty "within his ſoul that is empty or barren of the love "of God; that is, from which the love of God is ab-"ſent; and that all which it comes into our heart to "love, we may love for God's ſake, and enjoy in "godly love; for God loveth the ſoul, and therefore "ſhall the ſoul love Him without a fellow."

and be ever declaring His praiſe,

In the third place, the ſoul ſhall love God without ſilence; for he who is in love cannot be ſilent, but muſt proclaim and utter forth his love. St. Gregory ſpeaks of two ſorts of crying aloud: the one is that of the mouth, the other that of the works. He ſays of the voice of the deeds, that it is louder than that of the mouth. Of the latter, David ſays: "I have cried "unto God with my voice, and He hath heard my "prayer." Chryſoſtom ſays: "It is the habit and "cuſtom of loving ſouls that they cannot hide their "love, nor forbear to ſpeak of it, but they tell it to "their familiar friends, and deſcribe the inward flames

with our lips,

"of love; and the faults which they have committed "againſt God they tell to thoſe whom they love, and "cannot keep ſilence about them, but often ſpeak of "them, that they may obtain relief and refreſhment "thereby." The ſecond cry is that of the actions,—the way in which a man proves his inward love by his outward works. St. Gregory ſays the witneſs of love is the proof given by the works; for where love is, it works great things; but if it work not, it is a ſure ſign that it is not there. Thus Mary Magdalene had good reaſon to exclaim "Maſter!" for Chriſt is a Maſter of all Good. Therefore we ought to love Him above all things. And rightly is he called a Maſter of Love, for three cauſes; for He rewards nothing but love, He rewards only out of love, and He rewards with love.

and with our deeds, which ſpeak louder than words.

The Lord of love rewards nothing but love,

Firſt, I ſay that He rewards nothing but love. By three things may a man win reward: by outward acts, by inward contemplation, and by inward aſpiration and love. The outward act has no merit unless it be wrought in love; for the outward act periſhes and is over, and cannot merit that which is eternal. For Paul ſays: "Charity never ceaſes;" wherefore a man can never win eternal life by any works except they be done in love; and hence he who truly loveth God ſeparates himſelf from all that is not God; for he who loves the uncreated good, deſpiſes the created.

rewards only out of love,

In the ſecond place, I ſaid that God only rewards out of love. For from the love wherewith He loveth man, He giveth Himſelf, He giveth His very ſelf as a reward, He giveth Himſelf wholly, and not in part; for God hath loved man with an eternal love, and He

gives a man nothing leſs than Himſelf. He ſaid to Abraham: "Fear not, I am thy ſhield, and thy ex-"ceeding great reward."

and rewards with love.

In the third place, He rewards a man with love. For this reward conſiſts in being able to behold God in His clearneſs without a veil, and to enjoy the fruition of His love, and keep it for all eternity. Wherefore it was not without reaſon that Mary exclaimed "Maſter!" And thou too, O man, cry unto Him devoutly from the bottom of thy heart: "O "Maſter of the Higheſt Good, and my God, by the "love which Thou art, draw me to Thyſelf, I long "after Thy favour, and that I may love Thee above "all things."

How that Chriſt is a Maſter of the Higheſt Truth,

Now when I began I mentioned two other points: firſt, how that Chriſt is a Maſter of the Higheſt Truth, and therefore we ought to contemplate Him. Here take note that thou canſt contemplate God in His creatures, which He has made out of nothing, whereby thou art able to diſcover His omnipotence. But when thou ſeeſt and conſidereſt how admirably the creatures are faſhioned and put together, and in what wonderful order they are arranged, thou art able to perceive and trace the Wiſdom of God, which is aſcribed to the Son. And when further thou comeſt to perceive the gentleneſs of the creatures, and how all creatures have ſomething loving in them, then thou perceiveſt the loving-kindneſs of the Holy Spirit. Thus St. Paul tells the Romans that men are able to behold the inviſible goodneſs of God through the things that they can ſee; that is to ſay, the creatures which He has made. We are alſo

able to perceive God by the light of grace, as the Prophet ſays: "Lord, in Thy light ſhall we ſee the "light;" that is, God Himſelf; for "God is light, and "in Him is no darkneſs anywhere." Moreover we ſhall at the laſt behold God in the light of His glory, and there ſhall we ſee Him without a veil, bright as He is; for He is a Maſter of Truth, who giveth us to know all truth. In the third place, Chriſt is a Maſter of Perfection; wherefore a man ſhall leave all things to follow Him, for in God he ſhall find all things united in one perfectneſs which are ſcattered abroad among the creatures. Therefore, O man, if thou wilt be perfect, be a follower of Chriſt. He ſays: "Whoſo will not forſake father and mother, and "ſiſters and brothers, and all that he hath, cannot be "my diſciple." For father and mother, ſiſters and brothers, and all creatures, are a man's enemies if they keep him back from God and hinder him from treading the ſtraight path to eternal bleſſedneſs. Therefore forſake the creatures, and follow after the Maſter of Perfection, even Jeſus Chriſt, bleſſed for ever. May He grant us by His grace to do ſo! Amen.

and a Maſter of Perfectneſs.

XV.

Sermon for the Firſt Sunday after Eaſter.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

How we are to aſcend by three ſtages to true peace and purity of heart.

JOHN XX. 19.—"Peace be to you."

"PEACE be with you," ſaid our beloved Lord to His diſciples after His reſurrection. All men by nature deſire reſt and peace, and are ever ſtriving after it in all their manifold actions, efforts, and labours; and yet to all eternity they will never attain to true peace, unleſs they ſeek it where alone it is to be found,—in God. What, then, are the means and ways to find true peace, and the pureſt, higheſt, and moſt perfect truth? Now mark, I will ſpeak unto you in a parable. As our bleſſed Lord drew His diſciple St. John to Himſelf in a three-fold manner, even ſo does He now draw all who ever arrive at the deepeſt truth.

How that peace is the aim of all men's deſire and effort.

We muſt be drawn to God in order to find it.

The firſt way in which our Lord drew St. John to Himſelf was when He called him out of the world and made him an Apoſtle. The ſecond was when He ſuffered him to reſt on His boſom; and the third and moſt perfect was on the holy day of Pentecoſt, when the Holy Ghoſt was given unto him, and a door

How St. John was drawn to Chriſt.

was opened unto him through which he was taken up into heaven.

We muſt firſt be drawn upwards by the lower powers being governed by the higher.

Thus, like St. John, is each man firſt called out of the world, when all his lower powers come to be governed by his higheſt reaſon, ſo that he learns to know himſelf and to exerciſe his free ſelf-guiding power; ſo that he ſets a watch over his words, ſaying nothing to anyone which he would not wiſh to be ſaid to himſelf;—over his impulſes, marking whether they proceed from God and tend towards Him;—over his thoughts, that he do not voluntarily indulge in any evil or vain imaginations, or that, if ſuch ſuggeſt themſelves, they ſhould be made only an incentive and ſtepping-ſtone to better things;—over his works, that in his undertakings he may have a ſingle eye to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. On this wiſe does the Lord call thee out of the world, and make thee an apoſtle of Chriſt to thy fellow-man, and ſo thou learneſt to convert the outward into the inward man, which is the firſt ſtep in the Chriſtian courſe.

Secondly, by being changed into the image of our loving Lord.

Secondly; wilt thou with St. John reſt on the loving heart of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, thou muſt be transformed into the beauteous image of our Lord by a conſtant, earneſt contemplation thereof, conſidering His holy meekneſs and humility, the deep, fiery love that He bore to His friends and His foes, and His mighty, obedient reſignation which He manifeſted in all the paths wherein His Father called Him to tread. Next call to mind the boundleſs charity which He ſhowed to all men, and alſo His bleſſed poverty. Heaven and earth were His, and He called them not

His own. In all His words and deeds, He looked only to the glory of His Father and the salvation of mankind. And now ye must gaze much more closely and deeply into the glorious image of our Lord Jesus Christ than I can show you with my outward teaching, and maintain a continual, earnest effort and aspiration after it. Then look attentively at thyself, how unlike thou art to this image, and behold thy own littleness. Here will thy Lord let thee rest on Him. There is no better and more profitable way to this end while in our present state, than to receive worthily the sacrament of the body of Christ, and to follow the counsel of one on whom the light of grace has shone more brightly than it has on thee. In the glorious likeness of Christ thou wilt be made rich, and find all the solace and sweetness in the world.

Watchfulness ever needed.

But there are many who, having advanced thus far, think in their haste that they have conquered for their own the ground on which they stand, while yet they are far from the goal. Although St. John had lain on Christ's bosom, yet he let his cloak fall and fled when the Jews laid hands on Christ. Therefore, however holy may be thy walk in these two paths, look to it that, if thou art assailed, thou do not let thy mantle fall through thy hasty thought for thyself. It is good and holy that thou shouldst exercise thyself in these two ways, and let no creature turn thee aside therefrom, until God Himself draws thee up into a closer union with Himself. If He thus draw thee up, then let go all forms and images, and suffer Him to work as with His instrument. It is more well-pleasing to Him, and more profitable to thee, that

thou ſhouldſt leave Him to do as He will in thee for a moment, than that thou ſhouldſt exerciſe thyſelf in lower things for a hundred years. Now ſome may aſk: Art thou not yet got beyond all this? I anſwer: No; beyond the image of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may no man come. Thou ſhouldſt aſk: Art thou not got beyond the ways and works that thou haſt called thine own? Look to it diligently, and be quick to perceive the commands of God, and let each good work be followed by another.

Thirdly, how the door of heaven is opened to ſome.

In the third place, when the Holy Spirit was given to St. John, then was the door of heaven opened unto him. This happens to ſome with a convulſion of the mind, to others calmly and gradually. In it are fulfilled thoſe words of St. Paul: "Eye hath not ſeen, "nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of "man to conceive the things which God hath pre-"pared for them that love Him; but God hath re-"vealed them unto us by His ſpirit." Let no man boaſt that he is continually drawing nearer to the higheſt perfection poſſible while here on earth, unleſs the outward man have been converted into the inward man; then, indeed, it is poſſible for him to be received up on high, and to behold the wonders and riches of God. Believe me, children, one who would know much about theſe high matters, would often have to keep his bed, for his bodily frame could not ſupport it. Further, know ye that before that can come to paſs, of which we have here been ſpeaking, nature muſt endure many a death, outward and inward. But to ſuch death, eternal life anſwers. Children, this is not the work of a day or a year. Be not diſ-

couraged; it takes time, and requires ſimplicity, purity, and ſelf-ſurrender, and theſe virtues are the ſhorteſt road to it. Through ſuch exerciſes as we have deſcribed, a man obtains true purity of mind and body, ſuch as St. John poſſeſſed in a high and peculiar manner; what our Lord meant when he ſaid: "Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God." A pure heart is more precious in the ſight of God than aught elſe on earth. A pure heart is a fair, fitly-adorned chamber, the dwelling of the Holy Ghoſt, a golden temple of the Godhead; a ſanctuary of the only-begotten Son, in which He worſhips the Heavenly Father; an altar of the grand, divine ſacrifice, on which the Son is daily offered to the Heavenly Father. A pure heart is the throne of the Supreme Judge; the ſeat and ſecret chamber of the Holy Trinity; a lamp bearing the Eternal Light; a ſecret council-chamber of the Divine Perſons; a treaſury of divine riches; a ſtorehouſe of divine ſweetneſs; a panoply of eternal wiſdom; a cell of divine ſolitude; the reward of all the life and ſufferings of Chriſt. A pure heart is a tabernacle of the Holy Father; a bride of Chriſt; a friend of the Holy Ghoſt; a delight to the eyes of all ſaints; a ſiſter of the angels; a cauſe of joy to the heavenly hoſts; a brother of all good men; a terror to the Devil; a victory and conqueſt over all temptation; a weapon againſt all aſſaults; a reſervoir of divine benefits; a treaſury of all virtue; an example to all men; a reſtoration of all that has ever been loſt. Now, what is a pure heart? It is, as we have ſaid before, a heart which finds its whole and only ſatisfaction in God, which reliſhes and deſires nothing but

Of a pure heart which ſhall ſee God.

God, whoſe thoughts and intents are ever occupied with God, to which all that is not of God is ſtrange and jarring, which keeps itſelf as far as poſſible apart from all unworthy images, and joys, and griefs, and all outward cares and anxieties, and makes all theſe work together for good; for to the pure all things are pure, and to the gentle is nothing bitter. Amen!

XVI.

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Eaſter.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

JOHN xvi. 7-11.—"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Com-
"forter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend Him unto you. And when
"He is come, He will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment:
"of ſin, becauſe they believe not on Me; of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to the Father and
"ye ſee Me no more; of judgment, becauſe the prince of this world is judged." *



CHILDREN, it behoves us to give diligent heed to the meaning of this paſſage, and ſee how it is that the Holy Ghoſt could not be given to the dear diſciples and friends of Jeſus, unleſs He firſt went away from them.

What it is for Chriſt to go away from us.

What is meant by Chriſt's going away from us? Nothing elſe than our deſtitution, hopeleſſneſs, and helpleſſneſs, when we are heavy and ſlow in all good things, and cold and dark; for then Chriſt is gone from us. If perſons who are in this ſtate render it uſeful and fruitful for themſelves, this would be a truly noble thing for them thus to maſter and bend it; and to ſuch an one all variety will be fuſed into unity, and he will have joy in ſorrow, and be patient

* The greater part of this and the following ſermon having been tranſlated by Archdeacon Hare, in his Notes to "The Miſſion of the Comforter," I obtained his kind permiſſion to extract from that work the paſſages he had given there.—TR.

under reproach, in conſtant peace amid war and trouble, and all bitterneſs will to him become true ſweetneſs.

How when the Holy Ghoſt truly cometh to us He reproveth the world in our hearts.

Now our Lord ſaid: "When the Holy Ghoſt "cometh, He will reprove the world." What is the world which He will reprove, and how will He reprove it? He will enable man to ſee clearly whether the world is lying concealed within him, hidden in the principle of his being: this he will detect and rebuke. Now what is the world in us? It is the ways, the workings, the imaginations of the world, the world's comfort, joy, love, and grief, in love, in fear, in ſorrow, in care; for St. Bernard ſays: "With all wherein thou rejoiceſt and ſorroweſt, thou "ſhalt alſo be judged." Children, this will the Holy Ghoſt, when He comes to us, clearly reveal, and rebuke us on account thereof, ſo that we ſhall never have reſt or quiet, ſo long as we know and find this evil and noxious poſſeſſion within us. And when one finds this evil inclination in a man, that he is poſſeſſed by any creature, be it living or dead, and he remains unrebuked, all this is the world. And when a man keeps this in himſelf unrebuked, this is a true and manifeſt ſign that the Holy Ghoſt has not entered into the principle of his life; for Chriſt has ſaid: When He comes, He will rebuke all theſe things.

Sin is when the will turns aſide from its natural end.

"He will reprove the world of ſin." What is ſin? Ye know well, dear children, that God has made all things, and appointed each thing for its right end. Thus He made fire that it ſhould riſe up, and ſtones that they ſhould fall down. Thus nature has given to the eye to ſee, to the ears to hear, to the hands to

work, and to the feet to walk; and thus each member is obedient to the natural will, without any oppoſition, whether the matter be eaſy or hard, ſweet or ſour, if ſo be that the will thoroughly wills it; thus, too, the members are thoroughly obedient, even when it is an affair of life and death. This appears often in many lovers of this world, how they merrily and joyfully caſt away all eaſe, and riches, and honour, for the ſake of what they love, to the end that their carnal luſt may thus be ſatisfied. Now ſinners ſay, Who is thus obedient to God, and thus exact in all His commandments? Which of you dares thus to reſign for God's ſake his body and goods, and all that he likes or fears,—nay, every thing ſave his conſcience, of which God is the rightful Ruler? Now this is the ſin which the Holy Ghoſt reproves, that man ſo greatly and ſo often reſiſts His divine will and admonitions. This ſin and many hidden offences the Holy Ghoſt rebukes when He comes to a man. This rebuke works a quick, ſharp, hard judgment in a man, and a helliſh pain, and an intolerable woe, whereof worldly men know little. When this judgment is indeed borne, the caſe is ſafe. For a thouſand offences which a man truly acknowledges and confeſſes himſelf to be guilty of, are not ſo perilous and ſo miſchievous to a man as a ſingle offence which thou wilt not recogniſe nor allow thyſelf to be convinced of. Children, thoſe who are ſo well pleaſed with themſelves and others, nor have ever felt any anxiety about their ſin, except to prove that they are in the right, are very wrong; they are in dangerous ſin, and will never come to any good.

The Holy Ghoſt reproveth this ſin, and maketh a man to judge himſelf.

Secondly, the Holy Ghoſt reproveth us for our ſelf-righteouſneſs.

Next: the Holy Ghoſt will reprove the world of righteouſneſs. Alas, merciful God, what a poor miſerable thing our righteouſneſs is in the eyes of God! For St. Auguſtine ſays: Woe and woe to all righteouſneſs, unleſs Almighty God judge, for He has ſaid by the prophet Iſaiah: "All your righteouſneſſes "are as filthy rags;" and our Lord ſaid: "When "ye have done all that ye can, ſay, we are unprofitable "ſervants, we have done that which it was our duty "to do." He who thinketh ſomewhat of himſelf when he is nought, deceiveth himſelf, as St. John ſaith. Many a man is ſo heartily well pleaſed with his own ways, that he will neither open his heart to God nor to man, and keeps his eyes carefully ſhut, that he may not let God into his ſoul. If our Lord comes to him with his admonitions, directly or indirectly, he follows his own courſe, and heeds them not a ſtraw. Such men are utterly untoward, both to God Almighty and to all his creatures: but wherever the Holy Ghoſt comes, he reproves theſe men's ways; for wherever he is, man perceives his faults plainly, and learns ſelf-renunciation, humbleneſs, and all things that belong to eternal life.

Thirdly, He reproveth us for our judgment of others.

Thirdly: the Holy Ghoſt reproves man for judgment. What is this judgment? It means that every man paſſes judgment on his neighbour, and that they have no eyes for their own faults and ſin, although Chriſt has ſaid: "With what meaſure thou meteſt, "with the ſame it ſhall be meaſured to thee again:" "Judge not that ye be not judged." A holy man has ſaid: "By as many as thou haſt unjuſtly con-"demned, ſhalt thou be judged." The people all

want to be prieſts and provincials, that they may have a right to ſit in judgment, and know not what they are themſelves. And know that therewith ye build great thick walls between God and yourſelves. Children, beware of judging any but yourſelves, as ye love God and your ſouls and everlaſting happineſs. A man ſhould judge nothing that is not a plain mortal ſin. I would rather bite my tongue that it bleed, than judge any man. One ſhould leave this to the eternal judgment of God; for from man's judgment upon his neighbours there grows a complacency in one's ſelf, an evil arrogance, and a contempt for one's neighbour. This fruit is therefore truly a ſeed of the Devil, whereby many a heart is defiled, and therein the Holy Ghoſt dwelleth not. But where the Holy Ghoſt is truly with His preſence, He judges by that ſame man where it is neceſſary; and then that man waits for the hour and occaſion when it is fitting to puniſh. This muſt not be done ſo that when we would heal one wound, we inflict two in doing it; not with violence, or harſh words, nor ſo as to cruſh a man nor lower him in any other man's heart; but we ſhould do it as from love and gentleneſs, and ſo as to preſerve our own humility and poverty of ſpirit which we then bear within us wherever we go, and whatever we do, whether amid a congregation or alone. And herewith we profit no one elſe but ourſelves in a true ſimplicity; and let all ſuch things alone as do not concern us and are not committed to us.

Of the ſpirit and the manner in which we ſhould adminiſter rebuke.

Children, ye ſhall not ſeek after great ſcience. Simply enter into your own inward principle, and learn to know what you yourſelves are, ſpiritually and

Knowledge is not to be the great end of our ſtriving,

but the obeying of that which we know.
Acts i. 7.

naturally, and do not dive into the ſecret things of God, aſking queſtions about the efflux and reflux of the Aught into the Naught, or the eſſence of the ſoul's ſpark, for Chriſt has ſaid: "It is not for you to know "the times or the ſeaſons which the Father hath put in "His own power." Therefore, let us maintain a true, entire, ſimple faith in one God in a Trinity of Perſons, and yet not as manifold, but as one and ſimple. For Arius and Sabellius, who had a wonderful underſtanding of the Trinity, and the wiſe Solomon and Origen, who have marvellouſly inſtructed the holy Church, what has become of them? We know not. Wherefore, look to yourſelves, and know that no one is anſwerable for you but yourſelves. Therefore, give heed to God and His will, and to the calling wherewith He has called you, that ye may follow it in integrity and ſingleneſs of heart. And if you know not what God's will is, then follow thoſe who have been more enlightened by the Holy Spirit than yourſelves; and if you have not theſe either, then go alone to God: without doubt He will give you purely and ſimply that which you need, if you continue inſtant in prayer for it. If you are not ſatisfied with this, then, in all doubtful caſes, conſider the matter with ſincerity and earneſtneſs, and chooſe that courſe which you ſee to be moſt bitter to nature, and to which you feel leaſt inclined. Do this in the firſt place, for in each death of nature, God becomes moſt truly living in you, and will grow in you of a certainty.

Now, children, ſince the Holy Ghoſt could not be given unto the dear diſciples unleſs Chriſt went away from them, we ſhould in reaſon look to ſee with what

we are holding converſe. Wherefore forſake all things for God, and then God will be truly given unto you in all things. If you do this in earneſt, and with your eyes conſtantly fixed upon the truth, you ſhall receive a wonderful reward of God, even in this preſent time. And "when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He "will guide you into all truth." . . . "And He will "ſhow you things to come." Dear children, the Holy Ghoſt will not teach us all things in the ſenſe that we ſhall be given to know whether there will be a good harveſt or vintage, whether bread will be dear or cheap, whether the preſent war will come to an end ſoon. No, dear children; but He will teach us all things which we can need for a perfect life, and for a knowledge of the hidden truth of God, of the bondage of nature, of the deceitfulneſs of the world, and of the cunning of evil ſpirits. Children, walk in the ways of God diligently, earneſtly, and circumſpectly; and give heed to the calling in which God by His mercy hath called you, and follow it faithfully. Do not, as ſome do, who, when God will have them to mind the affairs of their ſoul, attend to outward things; and when God ſummons them to outward duties, want to turn their thoughts inwards. This is a hard, poor, perverſe courſe.

In what ſenſe the Holy Ghoſt will teach us all things.

Thus when the Holy Ghoſt comes to us, He teaches us all truth; that is, He ſhows us a true picture of our failings, and confounds us in ourſelves, and teaches us how we ſhall live ſingly and purely for the truth, and teaches us to ſink humbly into a deep humility, and to caſt ourſelves utterly down beneath God and beneath every creature. This is a true art

How He ſhoweth us a true picture of ourſelves.

in which all art and wiſdom is concluded, and which we indiſpenſably need for our true perfection and felicity. This is a true, hearty humility, without any pretence, and not in word or outward ſhow, but of a truth wrought into the ſubſtance of our ſouls. May God help us at all times to be thus prepared for the Holy Ghoſt to come and enter in to us! Amen.

XVII.

Second Sermon for Fourth Sunday after Eaſter.

Of three hindrances which reſiſt the coming of the Holy Ghoſt in three claſſes of men.

JOHN xvi. 7.—"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter "will not come unto you."

OBSERVE, dear children, how high and in what way man muſt be carried up to reach the ſtate of his higheſt bleſſedneſs; for this can only be through a real abandonment of thoſe things which are eſpecially pleaſant and lovely to him and his nature. To all theſe he muſt wholly die, and muſt let them go, however good, and holy, and ſpiritual, and precious he may deem them. For if it was neceſſary that Chriſt's diſciples ſhould be deprived of His lovely, holy, gracious humanity, to be fitted for receiving the Holy Ghoſt, no man, it is certain, can be a recipient of Divine grace whoſe heart is poſſeſt by any creature.

How we can reach our higheſt bleſſedneſs only by dying to nature.

Now we find three ſorts of hindrances in three different claſſes of men. The firſt are ſinful perſons, or open ſinners, who are hindered by the creature, in that they make uſe thereof againſt God, according to their own will. Theſe people go aſtray in God's way. David ſays, "Curſed are they who err in God's way,"

How the Holy Ghoſt is hindered from coming to ſome by their ſinful uſe of the

good things of this life.

that is, in the creature. There are alſo ſundry good folks, who ſpend too much care upon the neceſſaries of this life, or look too much for pleaſure to outward things. Againſt theſe Chriſt ſays, "He who loves "his life ſhall loſe it;" that is, carnal love; he who holds this too dear loſes his life; "and he who hates "his life ſhall receive everlaſting life;" that is, they who reſiſt their diſorderly luſts and deſires, and do not follow them.

How others are hindered from receiving Him by ſtopping at the ſign in the holy ſacraments, inſtead of reaching after the eternal truth ſignified.

The ſecond hindrance is when good people are kept back in true ſpirituality through the miſuſe of the ſeven ſacraments. He who dwells with pleaſure on the ſign of a holy ſacrament, does not get to the inward truth; for the ſacraments all lead to the pure truth. Marriage is a ſign of the union of the Divine and human natures, and alſo of the union of the ſoul with God: but he who would ſtop at the ſign alone is hindered by his outward ſenſes from reaching the eternal truth; for this is not a true marriage. There are alſo ſome who make too much of repentance and confeſſion, and cleave to the ſign, and do not ſtrive to reach the pure truth. Againſt theſe Chriſt ſays, "He "who is waſhed needeth not ſave to waſh his feet;" that is, he who has once been waſhed with a hearty repentance and ſincere confeſſion needs nothing more than that he confeſs his daily ſins, and not his old ſins, which he has already repented of and confeſt; but he muſt waſh his feet—that is, his deſires and conſcience; theſe he muſt purify from his daily ſins. Moreover many good men, by ſpending too much anxiety on outward geſtures towards the ſacred Body of our Lord, hinder themſelves in divers ways, ſo that they cannot

receive Him ſpiritually, and enter inwardly into the truth; for this is a deſire after a real union, and not in appearance merely. Hence they do not receive the ſacrament worthily; for all ſacraments are the ſign of ſpiritual truth.

How we may worſhip God in all times and places.

Here it is to be remembered that we ought to worſhip God in all places and at all times. He who will worſhip the Father muſt concentrate his whole mind in aſpiration and faith. Theſe are the higheſt powers of the ſoul; for they are above time, and know nothing of time nor of the body. So St. Paul tells us, "that we ought to rejoice evermore, pray without "ceaſing, and in everything give thanks." Now, thoſe pray without ceaſing who do all their works alike for the love of God, and not for any ſelfiſh enjoyment, and humbly bow down before God, and let Him work alone. When the higheſt powers of the ſoul are thus gathered together in prayer, the ſoul becomes inſpired, and if henceforward the ſpirit cleave unto God with an entire union of the will, it is "made a partaker of "the Divine nature," and then, for the firſt time, does the man offer up true worſhip, for he has attained the end for which he was created.

Of thoſe who ſeek the creature and not God in their prayers.

But there are ſome, ay, many people, who do not rightly worſhip the Father in the truth. For ſo ſoon as a man prays to God for any creature, he prays for his own harm; for ſince a creature is a creature, it bears its own bitterneſs and diſquiet, pain and evil, about it: therefore ſuch people meet their deſerts when they have trouble and bitterneſs, for they have prayed for it. He who ſeeks God, if he ſeeks anything beſide God, will not find Him; but he who

ſeeks God alone in the truth, will find Him, and all that God can give, with Him.

Of thoſe who are hindered from receiving the Holy Ghoſt by looking only to the humanity of Chriſt.

Again, many good people hinder themſelves in their perfection by this, that they look ſolely to the humanity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that they give themſelves too much to viſions: that is to ſay, that they are too fond of contemplating the images of outward things in their minds, whether it be angels or men, or the humanity of Chriſt, and believe what they are told when they hear that they are ſpecially favoured, or of other men's faults or virtues, or hear that God purpoſes to do ſomething by their means Herein they are often deceived, for God never does anything through any creature, but only through His own pure goodneſs. And He even ſaid to His diſciples, "It is good for you that I go away;" foraſmuch as to them that wiſh to be His diſciples in high perfection, His humanity is a hindrance if they fix upon it, and cleave unto it with eſpecial delight; for they ought to follow God in all His ways; therefore His humanity ſhould lead them onward to His Deity. *John xiv. 6.* For Chriſt ſaid, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and "the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by "Me." Greatly then do they err who ſuppoſe that they can do anything good of themſelves; for Chriſt ſays that of Himſelf He did nothing.

Chriſt's true humanity we are to worſhip only in its union with His Deity; for the man Chriſt is truly God, and God is truly Man. Therefore we are not to trouble ourſelves about any creature, but ſolely to ſeek God, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is our only Way to the Father. Now even if we come into the

Way of truth, which is Chriſt, yet we are not perfectly bleſſed, although we behold the Truth of God: for while we are beholding, we are not one with that which we behold; ſo long as there is anything in our perceptions or underſtanding, we are not one with the One; for where there is nothing but One, we can ſee nothing but One: for we cannot ſee God except in blindneſs, or know Him except in ignorance. St. Auguſtine ſays that no ſoul can come to God unleſs it go to God without a creature, and taſte Him without a likeneſs. Therefore, becauſe the ſoul is a creature, it muſt caſt itſelf out of itſelf, and in its hour of contemplation muſt caſt out all ſaints and angels; for theſe are all creatures, and hinder the ſoul in its union with God. For it ſhould be bare of all things, without need of anything, and then it can come to God in His likeneſs; for nothing unites ſo much as likeneſs, and receives its colour ſo ſoon; for God will then give Himſelf to the faculties of the ſoul, ſo that the ſoul grows in the likeneſs of God and takes His colour. The image lies in the ſoul's powers, the likeneſs in its virtues, the Divine colour in its union; and thus its union becomes ſo intimate that it does not work its works in the form of a creature, but in its divine form, wherein it is united to God; nay, that its works are taken from it, and God works all its works in His form. And then, while it beholds God, and thus becomes more united with Him, the union may become ſuch, that God altogether pours Himſelf into it, and draws it ſo entirely into Himſelf that it no longer has any diſtinct perception of virtue or vice, or recogniſes any marks by which it knows what it

How that it is by union and not by viſion that we ſhall be made bleſſed.

The light of nature muſt be ſwallowed up in the light of grace.

is itſelf. But God regards the ſoul as a creature. Therefore let the light of grace overpower the light of nature in you; for the higher knowledge the ſoul attains in the light of grace, the darker does it deem the light of nature. If, then, it would know the real truth, it ſhould obſerve whether it is drawn away from all things, whether it has loſt itſelf, whether it loves God with His love, whether it be not hindered by any things, and whether God alone lives in it: if ſo, it has loſt itſelf, as Mary loſt Jeſus, when He went into the ſchool of His Father's higheſt doctrine; therefore He heeded not His mother. Thus it happens to the nobleſt ſoul that goes into God's ſchool; there it learns to know what God is, in His Deity and in the Trinity, and what He is in His humanity, and to know the all-gracious Will of God. That man is moſt truly of God who works all his works out of love, and gives up his will to the will of his Heavenly Father.

That we may attain thereunto, being delivered from all hindrances, may God grant us. Amen!

XVIII.

Sermon for Aſcenſion Day.

This third ſermon on the Aſcenſion tells us how man ought continually to follow after Chriſt, as He has walked before us for three and thirty years, paſſing through manifold and great ſufferings, before He returned unto His Father.

MARK xvi. 19. — "So then after the Lord had ſpoken unto them, He was received up into "heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God."

AFTER the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, had eaten with His diſciples upon the Mount of Olives, and reproved them, that they had been so long time with Him and yet were ſo ſlow of heart to believe, He was taken up into heaven before their face.

How the diſciples of Chriſt do long to follow Him in His glorious aſcenſion.

Ah, children! how do you think it ſtood then with the hearts of the diſciples, who regarded Him with ſuch a ſtrange love? For it was not unreaſonable that they ſhould be filled with a reſtleſs, ſorrowful yearning to follow after Him; for where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo. By His glorious aſcenſion, willeth Jeſus Chriſt to draw after Him the hearts and minds of all His elect Friends, and all their powers, inward and outward, that we may not henceforward have our dwelling with contentment and ſatisfaction among the things of time; but that all

our walk and converſation, pleaſure and ſatisfaction, may be in heaven, and nowhere elſe, where God dwelleth not. It cannot be otherwiſe but that the members ſhould follow their Head, Who, as on this day, has aſcended into heaven, and has gone before us in all humility to prepare a place for thoſe who ſhall come after Him; therefore ſhould we ſay with the Bride, in the Song of ſongs: "Draw me, and I "will come after Thee," bleſſed Lord. And who can hinder us from following evermore after our Head, Jeſus Chriſt? For He Himſelf has ſaid: "I "aſcend to my Father and your Father." His origin, His end, His bleſſedneſs and our bleſſedneſs, is truly a bleſſedneſs in Him, for we, with all that we are, have proceeded forth from the ſame ſource, and therefore we are partakers of the ſame End, and deſtined to fall into the ſame Ocean (if we for our parts will only diſpoſe ourſelves accordingly).

John xx. 17.

If we would follow Chriſt into the glory of the Father, we muſt follow in His footſteps here.

Now let us meditate how Chriſt has gone before us into the glory of His heavenly Father. Therefore, if we deſire to follow Him, we muſt mark the way which He has shown us and trodden for three and thirty years, in miſery, in poverty, in ſhame, and in bitterneſs, even unto death. So likewiſe, to this day, muſt we follow in the ſame path, if we would fain enter with Him into the Kingdom of Heaven. For though all our maſters were dead, and all our books burned, yet we ſhould ever find inſtruction enough in His holy life. For He Himſelf is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and by no other way can we truly and undeviatingly advance towards the ſame conſummation, than in that in which He hath

walked as our Exemplar while He was yet upon earth.

How the hearts which have been touched by Chriſt muſt needs follow after Him.

Now, as the loadſtone draws the iron after itſelf, ſo doth Chriſt draw all hearts after Himſelf which have once been touched by Him; and as when the iron is impregnated with the energy of the loadſtone that has touched it, it follows the ſtone uphill although that is contrary to its nature, and cannot rest in its own proper place, but ſtrives to riſe above itſelf on high; ſo all the ſouls which have been touched by this loadſtone, Chriſt, can neither be chained down by joy nor grief, but are ever riſing up to God out of themſelves. They forget their own nature, and follow after the touch of God, and follow it the more eaſily and directly, the more noble is their nature than that of other men, and the more they are touched by God's finger.

How we may know whether our hearts have been touched by God by examining whether we make progreſs or ſtand ſtill.

Now let each one mark for himſelf, whether his ſoul has been touched by God or not. Thoſe who have not been touched by God often begin many excellent undertakings from which we might expect that great things would come to paſs; but if we watch them for a time, behold it all comes to nothing; for they ſoon fall back again, and they plunge once more into all their old cuſtoms, and give themſelves up to their natural inclinations. They do juſt as the untrained dogs in the chaſe, which have no perception of the noble quarry, but run with all ſpeed after the good dogs of nobler breed. And verily, if they kept on running, they would with them bring down the ſtag. But no; in the ſpace of ſome ſhort hour or ſo, they look about them, and loſe ſight of their

companions, or they ſtand ſtill with their noſe in the earth, and let the others get ahead of them, and ſo they are leſt behind. But the dogs of noble breed, who have come upon the ſcent of this noble quarry, eagerly purſue after it, through fire and water, through brake and buſh, till they have brought down their game. So do thoſe noble-minded men, who have caught a glimpſe of the Higheſt Good; they never ſlacken ſtep till they have come up with it. Now the other ſort of men remain at the ſame point, and make no progreſs in their whole life: but all ſuch as ſtand ſtill while they are in this ſtate, and make no progreſs before death, muſt ſtand ſtill for ever hereafter; ſo long as God is eternal.

It is our fault if our hearts have not been thus touched.

Children, if our ſouls have not been touched by God's finger, we have no right to lay the cauſe of it to the charge of the Eternal God, as men often do when they ſay, figuratively: "God does not touch "me, nor move me, as He does ſuch and ſuch an "one." This aſſertion is falſe. God touches, impels, and admoniſhes all men alike, and (ſo far as it reſts with Him) will have all men to be ſaved; but His touch, His admonitions and His gifts, find a different reception and reſponſe in different men. With many, when God comes to them with His touch and His gracious gifts, He finds the chambers of their ſoul occupied and defiled by other gueſts. So then, He muſt needs go His way, and cannot come in to us, for we are loving and ſerving ſome one elſe. Therefore, His gifts, which He offers without ceaſing to every man, remain unaccepted. This is the cauſe of our eternal loſs: the guilt is ours, and not God's.

How much uſeleſs trouble do we create for ourſelves; inſomuch that we neither perceive our own condition nor God's preſence, and thereby do ourſelves an unſpeakable and eternal mischief. Againſt this, there is no better or surer remedy than an inſtant, reſolute turning away of the thought, and hearty, fervent, continual prayer. Hereby we may obtain this ſteadfaſtneſs, together with a firm, and entire, and loving truſt in the unfathomable mercy of God, in which lies all our ſalvation, and likewiſe a diligent and faithful watchfulneſs, to keep our goings ever in accordance with the will of God, that all we do or abſtain from, and all our affections, ſpiritual and natural, may remain at all times agreeable to the will of God.

How the ſoul muſt be as a hill for the ſun of righteouſneſs to riſe upon it.

Children, the place from which Chriſt aſcended up to heaven was the Mount of Olives. This mountain had three ſorts of light. The firſt was from the ſunriſe, for the hill is high and ſlopes towards the Eaſt; and when the ſun no longer ſhone on the mountain, its rays were reflected from the golden roof of the temple; and, thirdly, on that hill grew the eſſential material of light, the olive-tree. So likewiſe the ſoul in which God ſhall ariſe ſweetly as without a cloud, muſt be a lofty hill, raiſed above theſe periſhable earthly things, and be illuminated by three kinds of light; that is to ſay, there muſt be a place whereon the rays of the high and holy Trinity can ſhine and bring forth God's high and noble work in the ſoul, according to all His will, and ſo that the brightneſs of the Eternal God may flow into that ſoul.

This mountain lay between Jeruſalem and Bethany.

The true followers of Chriſt muſt deſcend with Him into Bethany, the valley of tears.

Now, know of a truth that whoſoever will truly follow after Chriſt, muſt mount or climb this hill, toilſome or weary as the taſk may be; for there is no mountain on the face of the earth, however beautiful and delightful, but what is difficult and toilſome to aſcend. Thus, whoſoever will follow Chriſt, muſt ſurely caſt off Nature and her luſts. Now we find many who would gladly follow Him without pain or toil and as long as the path was eaſy, and would fain be upon this mountain on the ſide looking towards Jeruſalem, which ſignifieth peace, that it ſhould miniſter to their peace, and they ſhould be without contradiction. Such perſons experience in themſelves comfort, peace and joy; yet they come to nought. They will not ſet foot on the other ſide that looks towards Bethany, which name ſignifies the pain of obedience or of ſuffering. Of which place the prophet ſays in the Pſalms: "Who paſſing through the valley "of Baca make it a well." Know, dear children, he who will not pitch his tent in this valley, remaineth unfruitful, and nothing will ever come of him. However great his peace, and however fair his ſeeming, it muſt have an end. Therefore, a devout heart ſhall ever have a ſorrowful yearning after her Beloved, who has aſcended to ſuch diſtant and lofty heights, whither her eye cannot follow or trace Him. Hence, the more truly and deeply the ground of a man's ſoul has been touched by God, the more truly does he find this valley of tears within him. And had he no other cauſe for tears, there were need enough of them by reaſon of ſin and the defilement that lies hidden in our frail nature, by which man is ſo often and ſo

Ps. lxxxiv. 6.

greatly hindered from a lofty converſe with God (which might and ought by God's grace to go on without ceaſing within the ſoul), and from the ſweet aſpirations by which a man ſhould continually carry up all things to God, but that groſs nature hinders him and turns his thoughts aſide, and alſo often rules in ſecret where God alone ought to have His conſtant abode. This is the meaning of the other ſide of the mountain looking towards Bethany.

Thus ſhall he come unto Jeruſalem, the city of peace;

But he who ſhould experience in himſelf all that I have ſaid, would then have his face turned towards Jeruſalem, the city of peace, and thus would become wiſe as to all that he ſhould do or leave undone, and able to diſtinguiſh between the promptings of God and of nature. Further, this would ſtrengthen him that he might be the better able to bear pain and ſorrow, and not grow too weak by reaſon of his ſufferings and miſery, when he is forſaken of God, and left without comfort or help in bitter deſolation. The wiſe man ſays: "My "ſon, when the evil days come, thou ſhalt not forget "the goodneſs of God." Children, theſe two proſpects towards Jeruſalem and Bethany muſt be both at once in the ſoul of man. For Jeruſalem means a city of peace; yet in this ſame city, Chriſt was put to death, and had to ſuffer all manner of torments. Truly, child, ſo muſt thou alſo in perfect peace ſuffer and die to all that is thine, for it cannot be otherwiſe; and commit thy cauſe ſimply and truly to God, and renounce thyſelf utterly, for thou too muſt needs fall into the hands of the wicked Jews, who will and muſt torment, ſcourge, and crucify thee, and caſt thee out of their borders, as if thou wert a false traitor; and

but, like Chriſt, he muſt die there.

ſlay thee in the hearts of all men. Dear child, thou muſt utterly die, if God Himſelf without a medium is to become thy life and being. Nay, did not Chriſt Himſelf ſay to His diſciples: "Whoſoever ſlayeth "you will think that he doeth God ſervice?" For all thoſe who deſpiſe and judge thee, or torment and ſlay thee, will be perſuaded in their own minds that they are doing God a ſervice on thee, and mean to do ſo. Ah! dear children, how greatly bleſſed were ſuch a man, if he nevertheleſs were a dweller in Jeruſalem, and had a perfect peace in himſelf, in the midſt of all this diſquiet! Then would the very peace of God be indeed brought forth in man.

John xvi. 2.

Of the olive-tree of true devoutneſs.

Children, on this Mount grows the olive-tree, by which is ſignified true godly devoutneſs. Ah! children, the eſſence of devoutneſs is a cleaving of the whole ſpirit to God, with a mind ready and prepared at all times to love and to purpoſe all that is of God, ſo that the man is inwardly united with God in will and purpoſe and all things. This is an oil that overflows and riſes above all taſting and feeling. Haſt thou this olive-tree growing in the ground of thy ſoul, thou art in truth a devout man. This flame of devotion ſhall often be refreſhed and renewed with the fire of Divine love, and thou ſhalt unceaſingly look at and through the ground of thy ſoul, that nothing may be concealed there which is not truly and merely God's; ſo that nature may not rule and work in the ground of thy ſoul, where God alone ſhould dwell, and nought elſe. For, alas! we find many, both among the religious and the worldly, who do not ſimply purpoſe God in all things and nothing elſe, but will intend them-

ſelves in things ſpiritual and natural. We find very few who ſerve God for His own ſake, and do not regard comfort, nor joy, nor divine gifts in time or eternity, but God alone, and no object beſides.

And now may God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, grant us to aſcend with the eternal Son of God from this miſerable ſtate, and from all creatures, that we may with Him poſſeſs eternal life! Amen.

XIX.

Sermon for Whit Sunday.

JOHN vi. 44.—"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath ſent Me draw him."

Of the forlorn ſtate of the diſciples after Chriſt's death,



THUS ſaid the bleſſed Jeſus: "No man "can come to Me except the Father "which hath ſent Me draw him." The perſecuted, diſheartened diſciples of Jeſus, who were held captive in the bonds of ignorance as with iron fetters, and in their own eſteem were lying in the deep dungeons of their treſpaſſes, confeſſing themſelves ſtript of all their own might, cried with fervent prayer to the Almighty Father (as St. Luke tells us, that while they were "waiting for the promiſe of the Father," they "con- "tinued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication"), praying that their bonds might be looſed, and that they might be delivered from their priſon-houſe. Wherefore their Heavenly Father, to whom they had made known their requeſts in faith, heard their prayer, and ſet them free from all bonds, and drew them out of their dungeon by ſix ſteps into the glorious liberty of the Holy Spirit, where they were filled with all truth.

Acts i. 14.

and how God drew them out of it unto Himſelf.

Firſt of all, He turned His merciful eyes upon them, and made them fit to receive, not only His ordinary influences, whereby He is wont to bring men

unto Himſelf, but He ſought to bring them unto Himſelf in a peculiar manner above other men. For we find three other ways by which God draws men unto Himſelf. The firſt is by means of the creatures, in whom He very clearly reveals Himſelf to men through the created light of their ſouls. Thus St. Thomas tells us how ſome heathen, from the evidences of His in-dwelling and preſence in all the creatures, have maintained that God is the creator and ruler of the world, and how therefore in every part of the world honours ought to be rendered unto Him. In this drawing by means of the creatures, does God give a hint and offer of Himſelf to man. The ſecond way is by His voice in the ſoul, when an eternal truth myſteriouſly ſuggeſts itſelf. So St. Auguſtine ſays, that the heathens have diſcourſed of certain truths, and theſe they have reached by virtue of the eternal laws of God which are working in all men when they ſpeak what is true, and not by the mere light of their own nature. As Auguſtine ſays: "Whatever is true, by whomſoever it is ſpoken, pro-"ceeds from the Holy Ghoſt." Hence, at thoſe moments when all the powers of the ſoul are collected and turned inwards, it often happens that ſome eternal truth preſents itſelf with irreſiſtible clearneſs. This happens not unfrequently in morning ſleep, juſt before waking. This ſort of drawing may be called a whiſper of love, or a monition. The third way is when the human will is ſubdued, and ſtands waiting for the bleſſed Will of God, truly ſtript of itſelf and all things, ſo that the Almighty Father draws the created will without reſiſtance, and it leans towards

How God draweth men to Himſelf by means of the creatures,

by His voice in the ſoul revealing truths,

by the ſubduing of the will unto Himſelf.

Him with peculiar delight. This drawing may be called a union and an embrace. This drawing of the will towards God comes from the Higheſt Good; from Him who has created heaven and earth, and all the creatures, for man's ſake, and yet humbled Himſelf even unto death. Now it is becauſe He has a greater delight in man than in all the glories of heaven and earth, and for no other reaſon, that He ſeeks him out and gives him monitions through all things. It was that He might thus draw the beloved diſciples unto Himſelf that He caſt His eye of mercy on them, and through bleſſing and affliction turned and diſpoſed their wills until He fitted them to receive and follow His leadings. And it was becauſe the diſciples let Him work in them as it pleaſed Him, that they came at laſt to experience the full power of His drawing, as we may ſee in all that happened to them afterwards.

Wherefore God chooſes ſome rather than others for the objects of His ſpecial leadings.

Now ſome may aſk, Why did God thus prepare the diſciples for His leadings, and not me, or others before me, in whom He has not wrought after ſuch a ſpecial manner? For this ſpecial leading there were two cauſes: the firſt is the ſovereign will of God, who chooſes ſome men above others to be partakers of His myſteries and hidden ſweetneſs; juſt as a King, out of his mere good pleaſure, chooſes certain knights to compoſe his privy council and to be about his perſon. The ſecond cauſe is that one man liſtens more attentively to God's voice, and takes more pains to diſcover God's leadings, or endeavours more ſtrenuouſly to lay aſide his faults and whatever comes between him and God; and for this cauſe alſo one man is more ſtrongly drawn than another. Now becauſe the dear diſciples

had this mind in them, that with hearty repentance they beſought forgiveneſs for all their paſt life of ignorance and ſin, and meditated on the ſweet teachings and holy life and death of their beloved Maſter and His boundleſs love and reſignation, and forſook all things, and watched continually and committed themſelves wholly to God, ever waiting to diſcern His will, and gave heed thereto, and did without means ſo far as they could, and prayed for help when they could not; therefore this ſpecial drawing was given unto them, as it is ſtill given to this day to thoſe who follow in their footſteps.

Of the extent of man's powers, and how that he is free to reſiſt the monitions of God's Spirit.

Now it may be aſked, But the diſciples could not have made this firſt ſtep of their own power; for the Word of Truth ſays: "Without Me ye can do no-"thing." Therefore, it muſt have been neceſſary for God to draw them, and to influence their will, even as regards theſe three points already treated of. But if this be ſo, all hangs upon the firſt cauſe, as has been ſaid before. To this the doctrine of Scripture anſwers: It is true that we can do no good thing without God's ordinary influence, except we make progreſs by means of a ſpecial influence from the Holy Spirit; yet, at the ſame time, man may do his part, inaſmuch as his will has power to withſtand the offers of the Holy Spirit, and to cleave to his own way. God does not juſtify a man without his own free will; even as our eyes cannot ſee except they are enlightened by the ſun or any other light, yet even when we have the light we muſt open our eyes, or we can never ſee it. If the eyes were covered with a thick veil or ſcreen, the man muſt take it away or he could ſee nothing, how-

ever brightly the ſun might pour forth his rays. Now, when the Almighty Father came unto the diſciples with His Divine light, they opened their eyes, and caſt away the ſcreen of outward forms, as much as might be; therefore, God did His part alſo, and drew them up unto Himſelf after a ſpecial manner. This was the work of the lovely, Divine Son, who is the reprover of all hearts,—clearing out all ſtumbling-blocks and rending away all veils of darkneſs from the inward eye of the ſoul.

How the Father drew the diſciples out of captivity to ſenſe.

Secondly, their Heavenly Father drew them forth from the bonds of ſlavery to ſenſe, ſo that they were delivered from this captivity never again to fall into it, but to ſtand ready in perfect acquieſcence to receive His further leadings. Wherefore he gave them, by His beloved Son, four precepts, according to which they ſhould order their lives, as St. Matthew tells us: "Provide "neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs, in your purſes, nor "ſcrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither ſhoes, "nor yet ſtaves." He who only conſiders the matter aright, will find that this drawing them up above the things of the body was very neceſſary, if they were to enter the ſchool of the Eternal Light. For this ſchool has four qualities. Firſt, that it is raiſed far above all time, not only in the third heaven, phyſically ſpeaking, but above all the movements of the heavenly bodies, and all elſe that is ſubject to time. In the ſecond place, that whatever may be found ſtill remaining of ſelf-appropriation is not ſuffered to make itself a home and reſting-place in the heart. In the third place, in this ſchool is perfect reſt; for no ſtorms, nor rain, nor ſin, nor aught that can bring change, is there. Fourthly, there reigns

Matt. x. 9, 10.

Of the ſchool of Eternal Light.

perpetual light, clear and unbedimmed; for the ſun and moon, which ſet from time to time, and leave the earth in darkneſs, do not ſhine there. God is their eternal ſun, ſhining in His brightneſs. Now, ſeeing that all material, created things are baſe, narrow, ſubject to change and alloy, it was needful that the diſciples ſhould be raiſed above the trammels of material things, for St. Jerome ſays: "It is as impoſſible for "God to beſtow Himſelf under the limitations of "time, or temporal things, as it is for a ſtone to "poſſess the wiſdom of an angel."

The diſciples were drawn unto God more powerfully by ſorrow than by happineſs.

Here a queſtion occurs: Since the Eternal Father draws ſome men from earth by happineſs, and others by pain, by which were the diſciples moſt ſtrongly drawn? I anſwer: If you conſider their life, you will find that they were drawn to God much more by great hardſhips than by enjoyment; for even while Chriſt dwelt with them, they were always suffering contempt, and contradiction to their ſelf-love; and after His holy death, until they were lifted up as on this day, they were indeed well-nigh cruſhed to the earth with ſorrow and diſappointment, before the bonds were withdrawn from their eyes; and their Heavenly Father ordered it thus out of ſpecial love toward them. To be drawn to God through pain is in itſelf a ſurer way than by joy, as St. Gregory ſays, paraphraſing on the Pſalmiſt: "In time of perſecution "and tribulation, a thouſand ſhall fall by thy ſide; but "in a time of proſperity and good fortune ten thouſand "ſhall fall at thy right hand." So, too, is it more like Chriſt in all His life and death; and, moreover, it is a greater proof of love; for it is ſaid: "Whom the

Heb. xii. 6.

"Lord loveth He chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon "whom He receiveth." Wherefore, as the diſciples were to receive many peculiar and myſterious favours from God, ſo this was to be paid for beforehand, and for each gift a death was to be ſuffered—a dying unto themſelves; and if one trial was removed by God, He forthwith ſent another equally ſevere (as He does to this day with His beloved friends), and they underſtood this, and endured to the end all that their Heavenly Father laid upon them, until they came to have their ſuffering turned into gladneſs, and rejoiced that they were found worthy to ſuffer for the name of Jeſus.

How the Father drew the diſciples up above the corporeal ideas of Chriſt's humanity.

Thirdly, their Heavenly Father drew them up above all the corporeal ideas that they had of the humanity of Chriſt, making their minds as bare of thoſe and all other images, as they were when firſt created, in order that henceforward, according to their neceſſities, they might learn for evermore in the ſchool of the Holy Spirit. For this we are able to perceive four reaſons. Firſt; that truth and love, which are the end of all teaching in all ſchools, have no images nor any exiſtence outſide the ſoul; for no painting can, properly ſpeaking, depict truth and love; for they have no images, external or internal. No image or type which we can deviſe to expreſs love, is love itſelf; and it is the ſame with truth. Next; that in the ſchool of the Spirit, man does not learn through books, which teach through outward images addreſſed to the ſenſes; but here the truth, which of its nature does not ſpeak by means of images, is ſpoken into the ſoul itſelf. Hence the humble St. Francis commanded the

brethren of his Order not to trouble themſelves too much with books and letters, and that thoſe who were unlettered ſhould not be anxious about acquiring learning, but remember to covet above all things the Spirit of God, and pray only for a pure heart and His influences. Thirdly; becauſe in the ſchool of the Spirit man learns wiſdom through humility, knowledge by forgetting, how to ſpeak by ſilence, how to live by dying. For St. John was ſleeping when he looked into the fount of eternal wiſdom, and St. Paul knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body, when he was "caught up to the third heaven "and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawful "for a man to utter." Therefore it was needful for the diſciples to be deprived of all images that they might learn in this ſchool. Fourthly; where the mind is buſied with images, time muſt neceſſarily enter into the operations of the imagination, and this has no place in the higheſt ſchool of the Holy Spirit; for there neither time nor images can help us, but contact is all that is needed, the which may happen without time within the ſpace of a moment. St. Gregory ſays: "The Holy Ghoſt is an admirable "maſter-workman; He fills a fiſherman, and makes a "preacher of him; He fills a perſecutor, and tranſ-"forms him into a teacher of the Gentiles; He fills a "publican, and makes of him an evangeliſt. Who is "this maſter-workman? He needs not time for His "teachings; by whatever means He chooſes, ſo ſoon "as He has touched the ſoul, He has taught it, and "His mere touch is His teaching." For theſe four reaſons we can perceive how that it was neceſſary for

2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.

Of the teaching of the Holy Ghoſt.

the disciples to have their ſouls bereft of all images. But when they were drawn upwards to this end, not all happened to them which happened to St. Paul, when he was caught up to the third heaven; for, in the opinion of St. Auguſtine, it was given to Paul in his trance, and to Moſes in Sinai, to behold the Godhead without a veil. This was not the caſe with the diſciples at this time, for they well knew that they were ſtill in the body. Yet their hearts were ſo lifted up, and their minds ſo illumined with eternal truth, that they were enabled to receive that ſame thing, though ſome more and ſome leſs, which St. Paul afterwards received in his viſion.

How the Father drew the diſciples forth from the captivity to Self into the freedom of His children.

In the Fourth place; the Holy Father drew them out of themſelves, and delivered them from all natural ſelf-ſeeking, ſo that they ſtood at reſt, in true peace with themſelves, and in perfect freedom. Then ceaſed all the mourning, fears, and pain which they had ſuffered hitherto; for in the lifting up of their ſouls, there was an act of ſuch entire ſelf-ſurrender, that they reached the ſummit of that firſt ſtage of the Chriſtian courſe of which we have ſpoken above. Henceforward the Eternal Father could fulfil His good pleaſure in them without any reſiſtance from their will or natural inclinations. The Eternal Father thus drew them upwards, that He might reign as a maſter in them, in His omnipotence, greatneſs, unity, and love, and they ſhould learn of Him and grow up into His likeness. Hence it was needful that they ſhould be drawn out of themſelves, becauſe they could not be free, at one, noble and loving, ſo long as they were held captive to Self. It may be aſked: When the

diſciples were thus drawn out of themſelves, and all images were effaced from their ſouls, was there an extinction of their natural powers, ſo that they were dead to nature? I anſwer, No: their nature was not extinguiſhed, for they were much more truly according to nature in their ſelf-ſurrender than they had ever been before; for what the Lord of nature ordains for a creature, that it is natural for the creature to obſerve, and if it departs therefrom, it acts contrary to nature. Thus St. Auguſtine ſays, "that the rod in the Old Teſ-"tament was turned into a ſerpent was not contrary to "nature, for it was God's will." Wherefore I ſay too, that inaſmuch as the diſciples ſurrendered themſelves utterly to the Divine Will, they were in the higheſt ſenſe in harmony with nature; and their nature did not periſh, but was exalted and brought into rightful order. There were no fewer images in their minds than before; but the images did not diſturb their inward harmony or move them out of God. And when I ſaid that their minds were to be emptied of images, it is to be underſtood in this ſenſe, that it was juſt as when you ſet a lighted taper at midday in the ſunſhine, the taper continues to burn, and ſheds forth no leſs light than it did before; but its light is loſt in the ſunſhine, becauſe the greater light prevails over the leſſer and abſorbs it, ſo that it no longer ſeems to ſhine with a ſeparate luſtre, but is diffuſed and ſhed forth in the greater light. Thus I ſaid of images and of creatures in the caſe of the diſciples, that henceforth they performed all their works by means of the Divine light, and yet were much more according to nature, and their minds were as full of images as before.

How that grace brings us into harmony with nature.

How the light of nature is loſt and abſorbed in the Divine light.

How God giveth Himſelf unto thoſe that have given themſelves to Him.

Fifthly: the Heavenly Father drew His diſciples, thus free and acquieſcing, into ſo cloſe a union that He gave Himſelf as truly unto them, as they had given themſelves unto Him. Then all the deſire of the good pleaſure of God was fulfilled, and alſo all the deſires of the diſciples, ſo that God's will with them went no farther than their own wills. Not only did the Holy Ghoſt give himſelf unto them, but alſo God the Father and the Son gave themſelves with the Spirit, as one God without diſtinction of perſons. For when love is attributed to the Holy Spirit (as wiſdom to the Son), He muſt be conſidered as a diſtinct Perſon, as touching his attribute of being the bond of mutual love, but not as otherwiſe diſtinct. Here

How God giveth not Himſelf in the ſame degree to all, but accoraing to their capacity of love.

ſome may aſk, if the diſciples were all drawn out of themſelves, and gave themſelves up to God, did God draw them all to Himſelf in the ſame degree, and alſo give Himſelf alike to all? I anſwer: though all the diſciples were ſet free of ſelf, yet one turned to God with warmer love and ſtronger deſire than another; as the angels who kept their firſt eſtate all remained in perfect obedience to God, and yet one cleaved to Him with greater love than another. Wherefore God gave Himſelf more to one than to another, though all with like ſincerity turned unto Him. Thus was it with the diſciples; they turned unto God with unequal affections, and hence God beſtowed Himſelf and His gifts upon them after an unequal manner. The beloved diſciple John was the moſt highly favoured becauſe he looked up to God with the greateſt fervour of love. It is true, nevertheleſs, that in this matter much muſt be aſcribed to the ſovereign will of God,

who giveth to every man as He will. Further, we muſt note that it was not only on the Day of Pentecoſt that God gave Himſelf perſonally to His diſciples; for, as Richard and other doctors ſay, ſo often as that grace is given to man which makes the creature to find favour in the ſight of God, ſo often is the Perſon of the Holy Ghoſt given unto him. Thus the diſciples had many times before received the Perſon of the Holy Ghoſt, but they had never before utterly renounced themſelves, and opened their hearts to His gifts. Hence, in this ſenſe, He was firſt given unto them on the Day of Pentecoſt.

How the diſciples were brought into the higheſt ſchool of the Holy Ghoſt, and received His ſevenfold gifts.

Sixthly, the Eternal Father brought them into the higheſt ſchool of the Holy Spirit, in the which they ſtraightway underſtood the myſteries of the Holy Scriptures, and the ſimple naked truth of God, which cannot be underſtood by any of the mere earthly maſters in the schools. And in this ſchool the greatneſs of God was firſt laid open to them; and therewith the gift of childlike fear of God ſank down into their hearts, and abode there unto their life's end. Next, all power was given unto them, and they were enabled always to look up to God; and herewith they obtained the gift of ſtrength. In the third place, they learnt not only to obey the precepts, but alſo to apprehend the counſel of Chriſt, and therewith they received the gift of counſel. Fourthly, He taught them to feel the hidden ſweetneſs of God, and gave them therewith the gift of charity. Fifthly, He taught them how to obſerve and judge the creatures, and to distinguiſh between the light of God and the ſuggeſtions of nature, and therewith beſtowed on them the gift of

ſcience. Sixthly, He taught them to perceive aright their preſent condition, and all their previous ſtates, and gave them therewith the gift of underſtanding. Seventhly, He taught them to be transformed into the likeneſs of God, by loving union with Him, and gave them therewith the giſt of wiſdom. Theſe ſevenfold gifts does the Holy Ghoſt convey to the diſciples in His ſchool: for as the ſchools of natural learning teach the ſeven ſciences, and the ſchool of doctrine the ſeven ſacraments, ſo does the Holy Ghoſt, in his ſchool, teach thoſe ſeven things with His ſevenfold gifts.

How far the diſciples had an inſight into natural ſcience.

Here a queſtion ariſes: Did the diſciples in this higheſt ſchool of the Spirit obtain an inſight into all thoſe ſciences which are learnt in the ſchool of nature? I anſwer, Yes; it was given them to underſtand all ſcience, whether touching the courſes of the heavenly bodies, or what not, in ſo far as it might conduce to God's glory, or concerned the ſalvation of man; but thoſe points of ſcience which bear no fruit for the ſoul, they were not given to know. This in no wiſe abated their happineſs, or their perfection; for, as St. Auguſtine ſays: "He is a miſerable man who knows all things, "and does not know God; and he is happy who knows "God, even though he know nothing elſe. But he "who knows God and all elſe beſide is not made more "bleſſed thereby; for he is bleſſed through God alone." That God may thus draw us up unto Himſelf, and ſhine into our inmoſt parts with the ſame truth, may He grant us of His grace! Amen!

XX.

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

This ſermon telleth us of four meaſures that ſhall be rendered unto man, and of two grades of a godly life, and how we ought to love our neighbour.

LUKE vi. 36-42.

The leſſons to be learnt from the Goſpel for the day.

WE read in the Goſpel for this day that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſaid: "Be ye therefore "merciful, as your Father alſo is merci- "ful. Judge not, and ye ſhall not be "judged; condemn not, and ye ſhall not "be condemned; forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven; "give, and it ſhall be given unto you: good meaſure, "preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running "over, ſhall men give into your boſom. For with "the ſame meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be "meaſured to you again. And He ſpake a parable "unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? ſhall "they not both fall into the ditch? The diſciple is "not above his maſter: but every one that is perfect "ſhall be as his maſter. And why beholdeſt thou "the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceiveſt "not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either "how canſt thou ſay to thy brother, Brother, let me "pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou

"beholdeſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? "Thou hypocrite, caſt out firſt the beam out of thine "own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out "the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

How mercy teacheth us to entreat our neighbour.

I will ſay a few words on the precept: "Be ye "merciful, even as your Father in heaven is mer-"ciful." This noble virtue is, now-a-days, quite a ſtranger to the hearts of many, inſomuch that it is grievous to behold. For each is called to exerciſe this mercy towards his neighbour, whereinſoever the latter may have need of it; not only as regards the giving of earthly goods, but alſo the bearing with his neighbour's faults in all gentleneſs and mercy. But no! each one falls upon his neighbour and judges him; and as ſoon as any miſhap befals a man, whether deſerved or not, ſtraightway, without waiting to take thought, another comes along and lends a helping hand to make matters worſe, to put a bad face on them, and ſuggeſts the moſt evil interpretation that he can imagine; nay, it is thanks to God if he do not add a great piece from the ſtores of his own wicked imagination. This evil tongue (from which ariſe untold ſorrows and vexations) is at work at once before a man has time to reflect and paſs a deliberate judgment. Poor creature! as thou loveſt thy eternal ſalvation, wait, at all events, till thou canſt calmly reflect, and know what thou thinkeſt and ſayeſt. For it is a baſe and ſcandalous thing for a man thus thoughtleſſly and raſhly to paſs ſentence, which may not even be deſerved, upon his neighbours, with his ſharp, ruthleſs words, whereby he, ſpiritually ſpeaking, ſlays his neighbour in the hearts of others. And who has commanded thee to

paſs judgment? Wherefore Chriſt tells us that whoſoever judges another ſhall be judged by God: "For "with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged; and "with the ſame meaſure that ye mete, ſhall it be "meaſured to you again." Of this matter no more for the preſent; but let us conſider thoſe words of Chriſt: "For with the ſame meaſure that ye mete, it "ſhall be meaſured to you again."

Of the four meaſures that may be given to men.

We read in the Goſpel of four ſorts of meaſure that ſhall be given to a man,—a good meaſure, one ſhaken together, one preſſed down, and one running over. The doctors of divinity teach us that a good meaſure is for a man while in this preſent time, through the help and grace of God, to be in a ſtate of ſalvation and holineſs, whereby he may enter into eternal life hereafter. The ſecond ſort of meaſure is for the body of a juſtified man to be glorified with his ſoul at the day of judgment: this is the meaſure which is added to. The meaſure preſsed down is, that a man ſhould have his portion with all the ſaints and angels of God in eternal life. The meaſure running over is, that a man ſhould have a perfect fruition of God directly without means.

How that we ſhall be meaſured by the power of love in our ſouls.

Now, dear children, we will give you yet another expoſition of theſe words, and aſk: Firſt, what is the meaſure whereby we ſhall be meaſured? Secondly, who is He that meaſures? The meaſure whereby we ſhall be meaſured is the faculty of love in the ſoul—the human Will. This is, properly ſpeaking, the meaſure whereby all human words and works and life are meaſured, for this is neither added to nor taken from. By ſo large a meaſure as thou haſt meted withal ſhall be meted unto thee again with

Of the good meaſure of thoſe who lead a godly and well-ordered life.

thine own meaſure in eternity. And the meter is thine own enlightened reaſon and conſcience. Now let us obſerve firſt concerning the good meaſure, that it is, when a man freely and heartily turns to God in his will, and lives circumſpectly according to the commands of God and the holy Church; and moreover lives orderly in the communion of the holy ſacraments, in the true Chriſtian faith, being truly ſorry for his paſt ſins, and having a thorough and ſteadfaſt purpoſe to abſtain from them henceforward, and to live in penitence and the fear of God, loving God and his neighbour. Alas! there be few now-a-days who thus do, or even deſire to live in the fear of God. Children, one who thus lives is ſaid to and does lead a juſt Chriſtian life, and is a true Chriſtian man; and this is a good meaſure which, without doubt, hath a part in eternal life. Theſe are rules which all really Chriſtian men muſt needs obſerve. There are ſome whom God has invited and called to this "good meaſure," and of whom He demands no more than this. And it may very poſſibly be appointed and come to paſs that ſuch men may walk ſo unſpotted and godly in this way, that after death they may enter into eternal life without any purgatory. Yet nevertheleſs this is the loweſt path by which to approach to our merciful God.

Of the heaped-up meaſure of thoſe to whom God allots many inward exerciſes.

After theſe, there is a ſecond ſort of men whom God has called to tread a much higher path, that they may reach a much higher goal, notwithſtanding that ſome of theſe ſhould have to paſs through purgatory, inaſmuch as they have not lived perfectly and faultleſſly according to the vocation to which God had

called them. Theſe have to ſuffer ſuch long and ſharp anguiſh in the fire of purification as no human heart can fathom or expreſs. But when they have reached the term of their purification, they riſe a thouſand degrees higher than the former claſs of men. With them it ſtands thus: that having ſet out in a ſpiritual, bleſſed, and holy life, they were overtaken by death ere they had reached their goal. Now when theſe men are in the beginning of their ſpiritual life, they practiſe many excellent outward exerciſes of piety—ſuch as prayer, weeping, faſting, and the like; but they receive from God a heaped-up meaſure, in that they have alſo inward exerciſes, ſetting themſelves with all diligence to ſeek God in the inmoſt ground of their ſouls, for therein is ſeated the kingdom of God. Their life is very far different from that of the firſt claſs I have deſcribed.

How that outward obſervances are good, but the inward work far better and more needful.

Now, children, would a man attain to ſuch a point that the outward things ſhould not hinder the inward workings of the ſoul, that would be indeed above all a bleſſed thing; for two things are better than one. But if thou find that the outward work hinders the inward working of the ſoul, then boldly let it go, and turn thou with all thy might to that which is inward, for God eſteemeth it far before that which is outward. Now we prieſts do on this wiſe: for during the faſt days in Lent we have many ſervices, but at Eaſter and Whitſuntide we ſhorten our ſervices and ſay fewer prayers, for the greatneſs of the feſtival. So likewiſe do thou when thou art bidden to this high feſtival of inward converſe; and fear not to lay aſide outward exerciſes, if elſe they would be a ſnare and

hindrance to thee, except in ſo far as thou art bound to perform them for the ſake of order. For I tell thee of a truth, that the pure inward work is a divine and bleſſed life, in which we ſhall be led into all truth, if we can but keep ourſelves pure and ſeparate, and undiſturbed by outward anxieties. So in thy hours of meditation, when thou turneſt thy thoughts within, ſet before thy mind whatever thou ſhalt find moſt helpful to thee, whether it be the noble and unſpotted life of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or His manifold ſharp and bitter ſufferings, or His many painful wounds and His precious blood-ſhedding, or the eternal and eſſential Godhead, or the Holy Trinity, or the Eternal Wiſdom, or the Divine Power, or the gentle and compaſſionate kindneſs of God, or the countleſs benefits that He has beſtowed on thee and all men, and will beſtow evermore on thee and all thoſe who deſerve them and are found in God's grace at their end.

Of the benefits of pious meditation.

Therefore, dear children, among all theſe excellent things, whichever moſt ſtirs you up to true devoutneſs and fervent deſire, take, and humbly ſink down into the abyſs of God, with great thankfulneſs, and wait for God with this preparation. For, by ſuch exerciſes, with love, the ſoul becomes very quick to feel God's touch, far more ſo than by any outward practices of devotion. For the inward work is always better than the outward; and from it the outward works of virtue draw all their power and efficacy. It is as if thou hadſt a noble excellent wine, of ſuch virtue that a drop of it poured into a caſk of water would be enough to make all the water taſte like

wine and turned it into good wine. This would be a great miracle; and ſo it is with the noble, excellent, inward work of the ſoul compared to the outward.

Of thoſe who have great fervour but little depth, from lack of love to man.

Now, we find ſome men whoſe love is like a very broad veſſel; that is, they can meditate a great deal upon our Lord, and with great deſire and fervour, but they are hardly two inches deep. That is to ſay, they lack humility and a common godlike love toward all mankind. For, as St. Auguſtine ſays, "Salvation "does not depend on the length of time that a perſon "has been converted to God, nor on the number of "good deeds performed, but ſolely on the greatneſs of "his love." This we ſee in the example of the huſbandmen who, with great labour, till the wheatfields and precious vineyards, yet partake not themſelves of theſe beſt fruits of the earth, but have only rye to eat and water to drink. So it is with many perſons, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, with regard to the outward good works which they do, that other more noble-minded and devout perſons reap the fruit and benefit thereof.

Of the meaſure that is ſhaken together.

Next comes the meaſure that is ſhaken together; and this ſignifies an overflowing love which draws all things into itſelf; that is to ſay, all good deeds and all ſorrows, nay every good which is brought to paſs in the world, whether by good or wicked men, does this overflowing love draw into its own veſſel. And he who poſſeſſes this love has a much larger ownerſhip and delight in the good actions of another, who does thoſe actions but lacks this love, than the doer himſelf. Therefore, if all the pious acts, the maſſes, vigils, and pſalters that are read and ſung, the many great ſacri-

fices that are made for God's ſake,—of all theſe good things is more meted and allotted to ſuch loving men than to thoſe who may have done the good works, but do not ſtand in this overflowing love. For I tell thee that God will not accept the works of which He is not the beginning and the end; but, as St. Paul tells us, "Though I beſtow all my goods to feed the "poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and "have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Hence this virtue of godly charity is the greateſt of all virtues; for by love it draws unto itſelf all good deeds, cuſtoms, and ſervices, in heaven or on earth, which are the fruits of grace: what evil a man has remains his own, but what good he has is the property of love. Even as when we pour corn into a veſſel, all the grains do hurry forward and preſs together as though they deſired to become one, ſo doth love ſwallow up all the goodneſs of angels and ſaints in heaven, all ſuffering and pain, and all the goodneſs that is found in any creature in heaven and on earth, whereof more than can be told is waſted and thrown away, as far as we are concerned, but love doth gather it all up into itſelf, and will not ſuffer it to be loſt. The godly doctors of Holy Scripture tell us that in heaven the elect do ever bear ſuch great love one to another that, if one ſoul were to perceive and ſee that another ſoul had a clearer viſion and greater fruition of the Deity than herſelf, ſhe would rejoice with her ſiſter as though ſhe herſelf had won and enjoyed this bleſſedneſs. Therefore, the more while here on earth we approach and are made like unto this overflowing love, the more

1 *Cor. xiii.* 3.

How love poſſeſſeth all good things.

ſhall we enjoy of its bleſſedneſs hereafter in eternal life; for he who moſt entirely rejoices in good works here on earth in a ſpirit of love, he alone ſhall poſſeſs and enjoy love in eternal life hereafter. But this ſame ſpirit of love is what the Evil One always hates in a man: wherefore he is ever trying to bring ſuch as have it into a falſe ſelf-righteouſneſs, and into diſpleaſure with their neighbours' ways and works, ſo that the man conceits within himſelf that his neighbour's works are not ſo good as they ought to be, and ſo in a moment he falleth away from this love, and begins to judge his neighbour and paſs ſentence on him. And then from the depth of this judging ſpirit darts forth a ſtinging venomous tongue, that wounds and poisons the ſoul unto eternal death. This ſame arrow of judgment will ſmite and ſlay all the excellent and virtuous works that thou hadſt ſtored up unto thyſelf through an overflowing love, and thus thou wilt find thyſelf deſpoiled and laid waſte, and thy peace deſtroyed within thee, and then thou wilt be in a miſerable and dangerous condition. Wherefore, in godly faithfulneſs, I counſel thee ever to keep thy tongue with all diligence, if thou wouldſt be, and call thyſelf, a friend of God.

How the Evil One ſeeks to deſtroy this love by ſeducing us into a judging ſpirit.

Ofttimes too does the Evil One come and ſeduce thee into anger with a pious and good man. If thou uttereſt this by paſſing a judgment on him, in thus cutting thyſelf off from the fellowſhip of his love, thou art alſo cut off from participation in the benefits of the gifts with which God has endowed him, and the works of his virtue. Of this brotherly fellowſhip the Pſalmiſt ſays: "It is like the precious ointment

Ps. cxxxiii. 3.

Of the communion of brotherly love.

"upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even "Aaron's beard, that went down to the ſkirts of his "garments." Now the beard has many hairs, and the precious ointment flows into them all; but if one hair be cut off, it receives none of this precious ointment. In like manner, ſo long as thou haſt a whole and undivided love towards all men, a ſhare of the virtues and divine influences beſtowed upon all flows out unto thee through this love. But I tell thee, if thou doſt ſever any one from this ſpirit of univerſal love, thou wilt not receive the precious benefits of the outflowings of love. Wherefore give diligent and earneſt heed to yourſelves in this matter of divine love, and maintain a hearty goodwill towards all men, and bear no grudge againſt any, and deſpoil not the ſacred temple of God, which has been ſanctified by our higheſt pontiff, Chriſt; and beware that ye do not call down upon your heads God's everlaſting Interdict. But, alas! now-a-days, nature is ſo perverted in many, both clergy and laymen, as touching brotherly faithfulneſs and love, that if they ſee their neighbour fall, they laugh at him, or ſtand by and let it go on, and care nought for it. Take heed to your failings, and look how it ſtands with your inward love to God and your neighbour, and keep ever alive within you the fear of God; for I tell you that that which you fail to obtain here through your own neglect, you will loſe for ever. After this life nothing will be added to you or taken from you, but ye ſhall receive according to that ye have deſerved, whether it be good or whether it be evil. I tell you that then, though our Lady and all the ſaints ſhould intercede

for a man with tears of blood, it would not help him. Therefore give heed to yourſelves; for now God is alway at hand, waiting for us, and ready to give us much more than we are ready to deſire of Him. St. Paul ſays, Love never faileth, it doeth all things, and endureth all things. Therefore ſeeing that the love of God is never ſtanding idle, ſo be ye conſtantly abounding in good works, enduring all that befals you cheerfully, for God's ſake. And then ſhall ye be made partakers of the overflowing meaſure, which is ſo full, ſo rich, ſo generous, that it runneth over on all ſides.

Of the meaſure that runneth over, and the love that floweth back unto its ſource in God.

God touches this brimming veſſel with His finger, and it overflows, and pours itſelf back again into its Divine ſource, from whence it has proceeded. It flows back into its ſource without channel or means, and loſes itſelf altogether; will, knowledge, love, perception, are all ſwallowed up and loſt in God, and become one with Him. Now God loveth Himſelf in theſe men, and worketh in them all their works. The guſh and outflowing of this love cannot be contained within the man's own ſoul, but he hath a yearning deſire, and ſaith: "Oh! my beloved Lord "Jeſus Chriſt, I beſeech Thee to have compaſſion "upon poor ſinners, and to forgive them their ſins "and miſdoings; and eſpecially upon thoſe who, after "having done good works, have loſt the ſame again "by reaſon of ſin; and grant them, dear Lord, the "crumbs that fall from the rich table of Thy grace; "and of Thy goodneſs turn them from their ſins "through the pains of purification, and impart unto "them the overflowings of Thy grace, that through

"Thy merits they may be kept unto the end." Thus do theſe Elect men carry up all things, themſelves and all creatures, to their true ſource in God, and take all things that are done in the holy Chriſtian Church, and offer them up, from a joyful, humble, ſubmiſſive heart, to their eternal, heavenly Father, for themſelves and for all men, bad and good; for their love excludes none here in this time of grace, and they are alway in unity with all men. No love or bleſſedneſs that the ſaints or angels poſſeſs is loſt to them, but all is poured into their meaſure.

Verily, had we none of theſe godlike men among us at this preſent time, we were doubtleſs in evil caſe. Therefore let us all beſeech the God of all mercy, that we may fulfil and receive again this meaſure that runneth over. Amen.

XXI.

Sermon for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

(From the Epiſtle for the day.)

Admoniſhing each man to mark what is the office to which he is called of God, and teaching us to practiſe works of love and virtue, and to refrain from ſelf-will.

1 Cor. xii. 6.—"There are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame God which worketh "all in all."

ST. PAUL tells us in this Epiſtle that there are different kinds of works, but that they are all wrought by the same Spirit to the profit and well-being of man. For they all proceed from the ſame God who works all in all. "But the manifeſtation of the Spirit is "given to every man to profit withal. For to one "is given by the Spirit the word of wiſdom, to another "faith;" and ſo Paul goes on enumerating many gifts; but repeats that "all theſe worketh that one "and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, dividing to every man "ſeverally as He will." And he ſays many things for the confirmation of our faith.

Of the works wrought by the Spirit in man.

In old times the Holy Ghoſt has wrought very great and wondrous deeds through his ſervants for a teſtimony to the faith, having given us great ſigns by

Of the works wrought by the Holy Ghoſt in the

men of old time.

the raiſing up ſuch a ſucceſſion of prophets, and by the blood of His ſaints, and thus ſuffering unto death. For this kind of teſtimonies there is no longer any need. Yet, know that of true, living, active faith, there is, alas, as little in ſome Chriſtian men as in Heathens or Jews!

Of the offices of the various members of Chriſt's body, the Church.

Now let us meditate on theſe words of St. Paul: "There are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame "God which worketh all in all." Children, if you look around you, you ſee that you have bodies, and that theſe bodies have many members and many ſenſes, and that each member, ſuch as the eye, the mouth, the noſe, the hands, the feet, has its own ſpecial office and work. No one of theſe takes upon itſelf to be another, nor to do anything but what God has ordained unto it. In like manner, we are all one body, and members one of another, and Chriſt is the head of the body. In this body there is a great diverſity of members; the one is an eye, the other an ear, the third a hand or a foot or a mouth. The eyes of the body of the holy Chriſtian Church are her teachers. This office is none of yours; but let us common Chriſtians look to see what is our office, to the which our Lord has called and bidden us, and what is the gift of which our Lord has made us the veſſels. For every art or work, however unimportant it may ſeem, is a gift of God, and all theſe gifts are beſtowed by the Holy Spirit for the profit and welfare of man.

Our aptneſs for any art of life is the gift of the Spirit of God, and

Let us begin with the loweſt. One can spin, another can make ſhoes, and ſome have great aptneſs for all ſorts of outward arts, ſo that they can earn a great deal, while others are altogether without this

quickneſs. Theſe are all gifts proceeding from the Spirit of God. If I were not a prieſt, but were living as a layman, I ſhould take it as a great favour that I knew how to make ſhoes, and ſhould try to make them better than any one elſe, and would gladly earn my bread by the labour of my hands. Children, the foot or the hand muſt not deſire to be the eye. Each muſt fulfil the office for which God has fitted him, however weighty it may be, and what another could not eaſily do. Alſo our ſiſters ſhall each have her own office. Some have ſweet voices; let them ſing in the Churches, for this alſo comes from the Spirit of God. St. Auguſtine ſays: "God is a homogeneous, divine, "ſimple ſubſtance, and yet the Author of all variety, "and is all in all, one in all, and all in one." There is no work ſo ſmall, no art ſo mean, but it all comes from God and is a ſpecial gift of His. Thus, let each do that which another cannot do ſo well, and for love, returning gift for gift. Know ye, whoever does not exerciſe his gift, nor impart it, nor make use of it for the profit of his neighbour, lays up a heavy reckoning againſt the laſt day. For, as Chriſt tells us, a man muſt give account of his ſtewardſhip, or his office. Each ſhall and muſt reſtore that which he has received of God, and is anſwerable in proportion to his advantages over others, and the meaſure of the ability which God has given him.

not to be deſpiſed, but uſed with all diligence for His ſake.

Whence comes it then, that we have ſo many complaints, each ſaying that his occupation is a hindrance to him, while notwithſtanding his work is of God, who hindereth no man? Whence comes this inward reproof and ſenſe of guilt which torment and diſquiet

Wherefore it is that we find our work a hindrance in the divine life.

you? Dear children, know that it is not your work which gives you this diſquiet. No: it is your want of order in fulfilling your work. If you performed your work in the right method, with a ſole aim to God, and not to yourſelves, your own likes and dislikes, and neither feared nor loved aught but God, nor ſought your own gain or pleaſure, but only God's glory, in your work, it would be impoſſible that it ſhould grieve your conſcience. It is a ſhame for a ſpiritual man, if he have not done his work properly, but ſo imperfectly that he has to be rebuked for it. For this is a ſure ſign that his works are not done in God, with a view to His glory and the good of his neighbour. You may know and be known by this, whether your works are directed to God alone, and whether you are in peace or not. Our Lord did not rebuke Martha on account of her works, for they were holy and good; He reproved her on account of her anxiety. A man ought to buſy himſelf in good and uſeful occupations of whatever kind they may be, caſting his care upon God, and labour ſilently and watchfully, keeping a rein upon himſelf, and proving himſelf, ſo as to ſift what it is that urges and impels him in his work. Further, he muſt look within, and mark whether the Holy Spirit will have him to be active or quiet; that he may obey His godly leadings in each inſtance, and do and have undone by the influence of the Holy Spirit; now reſting, now working, but ever fulfilling his due taſk in peace.

How we muſt ſift our motives in our work.

And wherever you ſee the aged, the ſick, the helpleſs, you ſhould run to their aſſiſtance, and ſtrive with each other in fulfilling works of love—each helping

the other to bear his burden. If thou doſt not ſo, be ſure that God will take thy work from thee, and give it to another who will do it aright, and will leave thee empty and bare at once of gifts and of merit.

Virtue is nothing till it have been tried.

If, when at thy work, thou feel thy ſpirit ſtirred within thee, receive it with ſolemn joy, and thus learn to do thy work in God, inſtead of ſtraightway fleeing from thy taſk. Thus ſhould ye learn to exerciſe yourſelves in virtue; for ye muſt be exerciſed if ye are to come to God. Do not expect that God will pour virtue into you without your own effort. You ſhould never truſt in virtue that has not yet been put into practice, nor believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt have entered into a man, unleſs the man hath given evidence thereof in his own labours, outward or inward. Once as a good man was ſtanding, threſhing his corn, he fell into a trance; and if an angel had not turned aſide the flail, he would have ſtruck himſelf with it. Now ye are all craving to be thus ſet free from your work, and this comes, for the moſt part, from ſloth; each would fain be an eye, and give himſelf to contemplation rather than to work.

Of a certain holy man.

I know a man who has the cloſeſt walk with God of any I ever ſaw, and who has been all his life a husbandman,—for more than forty years, and is ſo ſtill. This man once aſked the Lord in prayer if he ſhould give up his occupation and go into the Church; and it was anſwered him, No; he ſhould labour, earning his bread by the ſweat of his brow, to the glory of Chriſt's precious blood, ſhed for him. But let each chooſe ſome ſuitable time in the courſe of every four-and-twenty hours, in which he can give his whole

mind to earneſt meditation, each after his own faſhion. Thoſe nobler men who are able to turn to God ſimply without the aid of images or forms, ſhall do ſo after their faſhion, and others after theirs. Let each ſet apart a good hour for ſuch exerciſes, each taking his own method; for we cannot all be eyes; but to our life's end it is moſt needful for us to keep up ſome ſtrenuous exerciſes of piety, of whatever kind God may appoint, with loving and peaceful hearts, and in obedience to His will. He who ſerves God after God's will ſhall be rewarded according to his own will; but he who prays to God according to his own will ſhall not be anſwered in accordance with his own will, but after God's will.

Enduring peace muſt be the fruit of long-tried virtue.

Children, it is of this coming out from our own ſelf-will, that the true, ſolid peace is begotten and ſprings forth, and it is the fruit of long-tried virtue. Unleſs thy peace come from this, be ſure that it is falſe; for inwardly and outwardly thou muſt be exerciſed. But the peace that comes from within none can take away. Now ſome fooliſh men, who are puffed up in their own conceit, come and ſay that ye ought to do this and that, and want to direct every man's mind according to their own opinion and their own notions and practices. And many of them have lived for forty years in the profeſſion of religion, and to this day do not know what is their own real ſtate. They are much bolder than I. I hold the office of an inſtructor; and when people come and conſult me, I inquire how it ſtands with them, and how they came into this ſtate. Yet I dare not paſs a judgment on them; but I lay their caſe before the Lord, and if He

does not give me what I ſhall ſpeak, I ſay to them: Dear children, ſeek help yourſelves from God, and He will give it you. But you want to judge and ſet an eſtimate on every man, trying him by the ſtandard of your own uſages and conceits. Thus it is that the worms get in and devour the good ſaplings that were ſhooting up in God's garden.—Then they ſay, "We have no ſuch cuſtom; this is an inno-"vation, and comes from the new notions," and never reflect that the hidden ways of God are unknown to them. Alas! what ſtrange things do we ſee among thoſe who fancy themſelves in an excellent way!

How the Holy Ghoſt teacheth the diſcerning of ſpirits.

Now St. Paul ſays, that the Holy Ghoſt, by His operations, teaches us the diſcerning of ſpirits. Children, who do you ſuppoſe are the men to whom God gives this power of diſcerning the ſpirits? Know ye, that the men who have this gift have been thoroughly exerciſed in all ways: by their own fleſh and blood, and have gone through the moſt cruel and perplexing temptations: and the devil has been in them, and they in him, and they have been tried and teſted to the very marrow; theſe are the men who can diſcern the ſpirits. When they are minded to do this, they conſider a man, and ſtraightway they diſcern his ſpirit, whether it be of God or no, and what are the neareſt roads of acceſs for him, and what is holding him back from God. Oh! how greatly to our hurt do we fall ſhort of the nobleſt, higheſt truth through ſuch trifling, mean things; for the ſake of which we muſt ſuffer loſs for ever and ever, ſo long as God is eternal. For what we here miſs through our own

neglect will never be made up to us hereafter. But may God help all of us truly to fulfil the offices and works which His Spirit has committed to us and taught us to perform, each doing as he is inwardly moniſhed by the Holy Ghoſt! Amen.

XXII.

Sermon for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

(From the Epiſtle for the day.)

Teaching us that we ought to receive God, in all His gifts, and in all His burdens, with true long-ſuffering.

2 Cor. iii. 6.—"The letter killeth, but the ſpirit giveth life."

How the old law was a preparation for the new.

THERE are two ſorts of men among God's friends; thoſe of the Old Testament, and thoſe of the New. All the men who should be ſaved before the birth of Chriſt had to obſerve the old diſpenſation with all its rites, until the new diſpenſation came with its laws and its rites. The old law ſerved as a way unto the new, and was a perfect foreſhadowing of it. And this new law we have under our very eyes, but it was the old law that prepared us to receive it. And every thing that is meant to receive somewhat muſt firſt be made able to receive.

Of the burdens of the old law.

The old law had many intolerable burdens, and terrible judgments for offenders, and a far ſterner manifeſtation of the juſtice of God, with a dark, diſtant hope of redemption. For five thouſand years the gates were altogether cloſed againſt thoſe who lived under the Old Covenant; so that, with all their pain and weary ceremonies, they could not enter into the Kingdom of God, but had to wait

long in gloom and ſorrow for the coming of the new law, which is peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Now he who would come to the new law with full aſſurance of faith muſt firſt be made at one with the old. Man muſt learn to ſuffer, and to bear heavy burdens, and to bow down humbly beneath the mighty hand of God; he muſt be afflicted outwardly and inwardly, from whereſoever his pain cometh, and whether it be deſerved or not.

How we muſt firſt be ſubject to the old law.

Dear children, behold! this thing muſt be brought to paſs after a very different faſhion from what you like to dream; but hold faſt the doctrine of God, and let him who hath received it be wiſe, and hold it faſt as long as he hath it. But ſubmit and endure God's dealings in all that befalls you, through whomſoever it may come. If you would come to the new law, you muſt firſt ſuffer under the old one, and be ſubject to it in the humility of your hearts. So, whatever conſolation may be granted you, ſpiritual or earthly, it will not follow you all your courſe through. And you muſt travel this road and no other; turn it which way you will, it muſt be even ſo. Therefore, dear children, learn to do without the Holy Sacraments, ſpiritual light, the ſenſe of God's presence, and all human help. Dearly beloved, bow down your old man under the yoke of the old law, with all meekneſs and reſignation, and receive all God's gifts with all their burdens. Of a truth, His burdens are light and His yoke is eaſy. Children, I commend you from the bottom of my heart into the captivity of the Croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; that it may be in you, over you, behind you, and before you, lying heavy on you,

and yet received by you with free and full acquieſcence to the will of God, whatever it may pleaſe Him to do with you. May God, of His mercy, give you to bear with a good courage all the ſorrow that is before you, and alſo, when ye are deſpiſed of all men, and ſlandered, and counted for nought. Thus let your old man be ſubject unto the old law, until Chriſt be born in you of a truth, where peace and joy in the truth do ſpring up. The patriarchs, greatly as they longed to ſee the advent of our Lord, yet had to wait five thouſand years. But, verily, if you would thus humbly yield yourſelves up, you need never wait a year. If you had had a quartan ague one year or two, you muſt bear it till you became well again; ſo you muſt bear the yoke of the old law.

Of the ſtern judgments of the old law which muſt be felt in our conſcience and borne patiently.

The ſecond burden of the old law was its awful judgments, and ſtern diſplay of God's juſtice. This is manifeſted in many ways—by afflictions and by the gnawings of conſcience. Now ſome try to work themſelves out of this by confeſſion. But if you were to confeſs your ſins a thouſand times, it would avail you nothing, ſave indeed the confeſſing of mortal ſin, accompanied by ſatisfaction for it. The reſt leave humbly to God, and bear what He appoints unto you, till He of His mercy ſend you relief. But confeſs all to Him inwardly in your ſoul, to the very laſt tittle, with humble ſubmiſſion to His will, and acquieſcing in His unknown judgments, without looking to yourſelf or to other men for help. Meanwhile, there are ſome who endeavour to get rid of the burden of ſin by aſking counſel and hearing preachers, hoping to hear ſomewhat that may afford them a

ſtay, and thus they may find deliverance. Behold, dear friend, if thou ſpend all thy years in running from church to church, thou muſt look for and receive help from within, or thou wilt never come to any good; however thou mayeſt ſeek and inquire, thou muſt alſo be willing to be tormented without ſuccour from the outward help of any creature. I tell you, children, that the very holieſt man I ever ſaw in outward conduct and inward life, had never heard more than five ſermons in all his days. When he ſaw and perceived how the matter ſtood, he thought that was enough, and ſet to work to die to that to which he ought to die, and live to that to which he ought to live. Let the common people run about and hear all they can, that they may not fall into deſpair or unbelief; but know that all who would be God's, inwardly and outwardly, turn to themſelves, and retire within. And know that if ever you deſire to be ſpiritual and bleſſed men, you muſt ceaſe from running outwards for help, and turn within; for you will never get what you want by a multitude of words, hear as many as you will; but only by loving and ſerving God from the bottom of your heart, and your neighbour as yourſelf, and leaving all things to ſtand on their own foundation. But pant after God with all your heart, as the holy patriarchs did, and covet that which you truly ought to covet, and leave all things, whether concerning yourſelf or any other creatures, to God's moſt bleſſed will.

We muſt not look without for help, but ſerve God and leave all to Him.

How the men under the old law knew not when the

The third characteriſtic of the old law was that it had a dark hope of a diſtant redemption; for the gates were cloſed, and there was no prophet who

could tell when the redemption might come to paſs. So likewiſe muſt we ſimply commit ourſelves to God with perfect truſt in His eternal purpoſe; for when He pleaſes that it ſhall be accompliſhed to our waiting ſouls, then, no doubt, He will come to us, and be born in us. But when? Leave that to Him: to ſome He comes in their youth; to others in old age; to ſome in death: this leave to His Divine will, and do not take upon thyſelf to adopt any ſingular exerciſes, but keep the Commandments, and believe the articles of the Chriſtian faith. Learn the Creed and the Commandments, and have patience, and give up thyſelf in all things according to the will of God, and aſſuredly Chriſt, the new law, will be born in thee with peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and thou wilt have a life like that of the angels, in freedom from the bonds of matter and in intelligence. This ſeems to thee a great thing! No; the truth is much greater. "The Spirit giveth life;"—a ſpark of His own Divine life, which is higher than all angelic life, and paſſes man's comprehenſion, lying beyond the ſphere of ſenſe and of reaſon. But this muſt come to paſs in the way that I have told you, and no other. A man may, indeed, attain ſo far as to catch a glimpſe of this glorious truth, and play upon the ſurface of it with his ſenſe and reaſon; but to become and be ſuch an one, to this none can attain but by this path of true ſelf-ſurrender; but through that aſſuredly it will be found.

In the Old Teſtament the Levites bare the ark, but here the holy ark bears us. Thus, whoſo will not yield to God in His juſtice and His judgments, with-

redemption ſhould come, and ſo muſt we too commit ourſelves unto God, and wait His time to receive peace and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

out doubt he ſhall fall under God's eternal juſtice and eternal condemnation; it cannot be otherwiſe. Turn it as thou wilt, thou muſt give thyſelf to ſuffer what is appointed thee. But if we did that, God would bear us up at all times in all our ſorrows and troubles, and God would lay His ſhoulder under our burdens, and help us to bear them. For if with a cheerful courage we ſubmitted ourſelves to God, no ſuffering would be unbearable. For it is becauſe now we are without God, and ſtanding in our own weakneſs, that we are neither able to endure nor yet to act. God help us all worthily to bear His yoke! Amen.

XXIII.

Second Sermon for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

(From the Goſpel for the day.)

This ſermon tells us how a man who truly loves God, whoſe ears have been opened to receive the ſeven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, is neither lifted up in joy nor caſt down in ſorrow.

MARK vii. 37.—"He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear and the "dumb to ſpeak."

Of the man who was born deaf and dumb.

WE read in the Goſpel for this day, that as our bleſſed Lord was going from one place to another, they brought unto Him a man who was born deaf and dumb; as muſt needs be; for he who is born deaf muſt alſo be dumb; for ſince he has never heard, he does not know what ſpeech is. The Lord put His fingers into the ears of this deaf man, and touched his tongue with His ſpittle, and ſaid, "Be opened." And when the people ſaw what was done, they came together and wondered at the miracle; ſaying: "He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to ſpeak."

How we have become deaf through liſtening to the Tempter, ſo

Children, it behoves us greatly to mark what it is that makes men deaf, like the man in the Goſpel. From the time that the firſt man opened his ears to the voice of the Enemy, he became deaf thereby, and

that we cannot hear the Eternal Word.

all we after him, ſo that we cannot hear or underſtand the ſweet voice of the Eternal Word. Yet we know that the Eternal Word is ſtill ſo unutterably nigh to us inwardly, in the very principle of our being, that not even man himſelf, his own nature, his own thoughts, nor aught that can be named, or ſaid, or underſtood, is ſo nigh or planted ſo deep within him, as the Eternal Word is in man. And it is ever ſpeaking in man; but he hears it not by reaſon of the ſore deafneſs that has come upon him. Whoſe fault is this? I ſay that ſomething has covered man's ears, and ſtopped them up that he may not hear this Word; and his ſenſe is ſo benumbed that he has become dumb, not knowing his own ſelf. If he deſired to ſpeak of what is within him, he could not; for he does not know how it ſtands with him, nor diſcern his own ways and works. The cauſe whereof is that the Enemy has whiſpered in his ear, and he has liſtened to the voice, and hence has he grown deaf and dumb. What is

By what ways the Enemy ſpeaks to us.

this moſt hurtful whiſpering of the Enemy? It is every diſorderly image or ſuggestion that ſtarts up in thy mind, whether belonging to thy creature likings and wiſhes, or the world and the things thereof; whether it be thy wealth, reputation, friends or relations, or thy own fleſh, or whatever it be that lays hold of thy fancy, making thee to like or do ſomewhat. Through all theſe he has his acceſs to thy ſoul; for he is ever at hand; and as he marks to what a man is inclined inwardly or outwardly, what he likes and diſlikes, ſtraightway he lays hold of it and attacks him with that weapon, and ſuggeſts what agrees with that man's inclination, and pours into the ears of his ſoul

all manner of imaginations concerning that thing, that the man may not be able to hear the Eternal Word. If the man inſtantly turned his ears and mind away from the enemy, the aſſault would be eaſily repulſed, but as ſoon as he opens his ears ſo far as to dwell upon and dally with temptation, he is already well nigh conquered, and the ſtrife is at the hardeſt. But as ſoon as thou haſt bravely turned thy ear away, thou haſt well nigh prevailed; for this enables thee to hear the inward voice of the Word, and takes away thy deafneſs. Not only wordly but alſo religious men are liable to this deafneſs, if they make the creature their idol and aim, and their hearts are poſſeſſed therewith. The Devil has marked this, and ſuggeſts to them the imaginations to which he finds them inclined. With ſome their ears are ſtopped up with their own inventions, and the daily routine of habit with which they go through certain outward acts, learnt by means of their ſenſes from the creatures. All this dulls a man's hearing ſo that he cannot apprehend the Eternal Word ſpeaking within him, nor in any wiſe underſtand what it ſays. It is true, however, that we ought to maintain the habit and practice of works of piety, though without a ſpirit of ſelf-exaltation on account of them, ſuch as prayer, or meditation, or the like, in order that our ſluggiſh nature may be aroused into vigour, our minds raiſed on high, and our hearts allured and kindled. But there muſt be no claiming to ourſelves thereof, but rather our ears muſt be left open to liſten to the whiſpers of the Eternal Word. Let us not be as ſome obſtinate men who never go forward, but to the

Of thoſe whom habit has made deaf to the Eternal Word.

day of their death remain ſtanding on their outward cuſtoms, ſeeking for nothing further, and when God would ſay aught unto them, there is always ſomething that gets into their ears, ſo that His Word cannot be heard. Children, at the laſt day, when all things come to be laid bare and open, it will be an everlaſting ſorrow to think of the endleſs variety of theſe things that have come between us and God, and how we have been entangled in mean bondage to our own ways and habits.

How that the Word does not ſpeak to us except we love God, and of the teſts of true love.

Now the Word is ſpoken into no man's ear, except he have the love of God; for Chriſt ſays: "If "ye love me, hear my words." On this point ſays St. Gregory: "Wilt thou know whether thou love "God? take note when cares, troubles, or ſorrows "overtake thee (from within or from without, "whenceſoever they come), and weigh down thy "ſpirit ſo that thou knoweſt not which way to turn, "nor what is to become of thee, and canſt find no "counſel and art outwardly in a ſtorm of affliction, "in unwonted perplexity and ſore diſtreſs; if thou "then remaineſt inwardly at peace and unmoved in "the bottom of thy heart, ſo that thou doſt not in "any wiſe falter, either by complaint, or in word, or "work, or geſture, then there is no doubt that thou "loveſt God." For where there is true love, a man is neither out of meaſure lifted up by proſperity, nor caſt down by miſhap; whether you give or take away from him, ſo long as he keeps his beloved, he has a ſpring of inward peace. Thus, even though thy outward man grieve, or weep downright, that may well be borne, if only thy inner man remain at peace, per-

fectly content with the will of God. But if thou doſt not find it thus with thee, then thou art in truth deaf, and haſt not really heard the voice of the Eternal Word within thee.

Of univerſal thankfulneſs to God;

Further, thou mayeſt try by this teſt whether thou haſt the right ſort of love; namely, whether thou haſt a lively thankfulneſs for the great benefits which God has beſtowed upon thee and all His creatures in heaven and on earth, and for His holy Incarnation, and for all the manifold giſts which are ever flowing out from Him to all men. And this thankfulneſs ſhall comprehend all men, even as it ſhall ſpring from love to all; whether they be clergy or laymen, monks, nuns, or in whatever condition of life they be, or whatever be their conduct, thou ſhalt cheriſh an honeſt, true love for them, not a concealed ſelf-love, or ſelf-ſeeking. This real, univerſal love is a ſource of meaſureleſs benefits. Know ye, children, that where men are true, glorified friends of God, their hearts melt with tenderneſs towards all mankind, living or dead; and if there were none ſuch on the earth, the world were in an evil plight. Moreover, thou ſhalt let thy love ſhine forth before men, ſo far as in thee lies, imparting to them of thy ſubſtance, and giving them comfort, help, and counſel. It is true that thou muſt miniſter to thine own neceſſities; but when thou haſt nothing to ſpare, thy love ſhould be ſtill lively, wiſhing that thou hadſt aught to give, and ready to do ſo to the utmoſt of thy power. Theſe are the true ſigns of love and that a man is not ſpiritually deaf.

ſhown by benefits rendered to man.

Now when our Lord comes and puts his finger into a man's ear and touches his tongue, how elo-

Of the ſeven gifts of the Spirit imparted by the Lord's touch.

quent will he become! O children, of this wondrous things might be ſaid! But we will now conſider the ſeven gifts of the Spirit, given to man through this touch whereby the ears of his mind are opened. Firſt is given unto him the ſpirit of fear, which has power to rid him of all ſelf-will, and teaches him to flee from temptation, and at all times to ſhun unruly appetites and licence. Next is given to him the ſpirit of charity, which makes him ſweet-tempered, kind-hearted, merciful, not ready to paſs a harſh judgment on any one's conduct, but full of tolerance. Thirdly, he receives the gift of knowledge, ſo that he underſtands the meaning of his inward experience, and thus learns to guide himſelf according to the bleſſed will of God. The fourth gift is Divine ſtrength: through this gift ſuch Divine might is imparted unto him, that, with Paul, it becomes a ſmall and eaſy matter to him to do or bear all things through God who ſtrengtheneth him. The fifth is the gift of good counſel, which all thoſe who follow become gentle and loving. Laſtly, come two great gifts, underſtanding and the wiſdom of inſight, which are ſo ſublime and glorious, that it is better to ſeek to experience them than to ſpeak thereof. That our ears may thus be opened of a truth, that the Eternal Word may be heard in us, may God grant us! Amen!

XXIV.

Sermon for the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

(From the Goſpel for the Day.)

This ſermon forbiddeth all carefulneſs, and telleth in what righteouſneſs conſiſteth, and rebukes ſundry religious people and their works, likening their ways to ſimony.

MATT. vi. 33.—"Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and His righteouſneſs, and all theſe things "ſhall be added unto you."

Of the leſſons taught by this Goſpel for the day.

IN this paſſage, the Son of God gives us a ſimilitude, bidding man, who is a reaſonable creature, to look at the flowers that deck the face of the earth, and at the unreaſoning fowls of the air, ſaying: "Con- "ſider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, "they ſpin not; and yet I ſay unto you that Solomon, "in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe!" "Behold the fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither "do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Hea- "venly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better "than they?" "Therefore I ſay unto you, take no "thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat, or what ſhall "we drink, or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed? For "after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek: for your "Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all "theſe things. But ſeek ye firſt the kingdom of God,

" and his righteouſneſs; and all theſe things ſhall be " added unto you."

How that we cannot ſerve God and Mammon.

Children, once before, the Son of God had ſaid that no man could ſerve two maſters, that is to ſay, God and Mammon, or the riches of this world; for he muſt love the one, and hate the other. It is indeed a wonder paſſing our underſtanding how much is comprehended in theſe words. We ought to ſet them up before our eyes as a mirror, and let them be our conſtant motto. How clearly does Chriſt here inſtruct us in the truth with plain unvarniſhed words and pertinent figures, when, forbidding us to be anxious about earthly and periſhable things, he ſays: " Which " of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto " his ſtature? Therefore, ye of little faith, ſeek not " what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink; neither " be ye of doubtful mind." Children, ye ſee well by this diſcourſe how far we all are in common from living according to the ſimple truth of things, in all our earthly relationſhips. But know that there is an inward ſecret defect lurking under the cloak of our anxiety about daily things, a ſinful, though unconſcious covetouſneſs, which is one of the ſeven deadly ſins. And this ſin, working ſilently and unperceived in the hearts both of worldly and religious people, is the cauſe of the greateſt evils that afflict this earth. Let each, for inſtance, only mark narrowly, in himſelf and others, the marvels of labour and ingenuity invented and wrought on all ſides, each ſtriving to outdo his fellow for the ſake of earthly gain. If we were to probe to the bottom the workings of this falſe principle in worldly and in religious people, it could

How all faithleſs anxieties are a ſerving of Mammon.

hardly be told how deeply its roots have ſtruck, and how widely they have ſpread below the ſurface. Think what it implies to have ſo little confidence in that God who is able to do all things, when ye are ſtriving, and toiling, and wearing yourſelves out with anxiety, as if you meant to live for ever. All this comes from that evil principle of covetouſneſs. If one really looked into the matter, it were frightful to ſee how man ſeeks his own ends and not his neighbour's good, in all things Divine and human; his own pleaſure, or profit, or glory, by all his words and works — nay, even gifts and ſervices. Children, this great ſin is ſo deeply rooted in many, that every corner of their heart is full of earthly, periſhable things, and they are juſt like the crooked woman we read of in the Goſpel, who was bent down to the earth by her infirmity, and could in no wiſe lift herſelf up, or raiſe her eyes above the ground.

How the blind want of truſt in God bringeth us into divers temptations that eat out all ſpiritual life.

Thou poor blind man, ſpiritual in outward veſture but not in reality, why ſhouldſt thou not truſt that the God who has done thee ſo great a benefit in redeeming thee from the carking cares of this falſe, wicked world, that He is alſo willing to give thee ſuch poor mean things as are needful for thy earthly ſuſtenance? And is it not a pitiful thing that a religious man ſhould ſpend his whole induſtry, and ſole effort, and have his thoughts turned, day and night, upon his own little doings, and ſhould be ſo full of them that he can hardly properly hold converſe with God, or his own heart? And if what he has in hand ſucceeds, he feels no impulſe urging him onwards towards eternal things, except in ſo far as it may be

neceſſary to ſecure his own ſalvation, and from the delight that he may find in his own good works; and he is as much taken up with petty perſonal cares as wordly people are with weightier things. Wherefore our Lord ſays: Ye cannot ſerve two maſters; ye cannot ſerve God and riches. But ſeek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, which is before all things and above all things, and His righteouſneſs, and "all other "things ſhall be added unto you." Juſt as if He had ſaid, theſe are not worthy to be called a gift; but they ſhall be added over and above God's gifts. How greatly theſe vain, pitiful things are eſteemed and loved and ſought after, ſecretly and openly, and what anxiety they give riſe to, and how eagerly men deſire them, and heap up treaſures by unlawful means, is not to be fully ſet forth, and I muſt not attempt it.

1 Pet. v. 7. How that undue care blinds our reaſon, quenches our love, and comes between us and God.

St. Peter ſays: "Caſt all your care upon God, for "He careth for you." This carefulneſs concerning outward things works a man three great injuries. It blinds his reaſon and good ſenſe; it quenches the fire of love, and deſtroys all its fervour and heat; and it blocks up the ways of ſecret acceſs to God. It is like a noxious vapour, or thick ſmoke, that riſes up and chokes a man's breath. This care is born of the ſin and vice of covetouſneſs. Therefore look well to your footſteps, and ſee with what ye hold converſe while you are in this preſent ſtate, and ſeek the Kingdom of God and His righteouſneſs, that you may find and diſcover it where it lies hidden in the inmoſt depths of the ſoul, that it do not moulder away or remain unfruitful within you. But to this end, he who purpoſes manfully to withſtand himſelf, the

Devil, and the world, muſt ſuſtain many bold, valiant conflicts, without reſt or intermiſſion. For the Kingdom of God will never be truly found except theſe faults be firſt caſt off; and this is not the work of a day. For whatever a man ſhall take by force, he muſt firſt with great pains conquer; and thus he muſt make continual efforts before his outward man can be drawn away from the love of theſe periſhable things. For this vice has ſtruck its hidden roots ſo deeply into the animal nature of man, that he ſeeks himſelf in all things,—in his words and works, in his dealings with others, and in his friendſhips; nay, the miſerable ſelf-ſeeking of nature works in ſecret even as regards God, making men crave to enjoy comfort, illumination, ſweet emotions; in ſhort, they are ever wiſhing to obtain ſomething, and would fain hold converſe with the world and yet poſſeſs the Kingdom of Heaven. But we ought to bear all things in the holy faith of Chriſt, and leave the reward to God.

But many conflicts are needful to conquer it.

Do good works, and exerciſe thyſelf in all virtue, and God ſhall give thee a great reward, in ſo far as thou haſt kept thyſelf from judging thy neighbour, and haſt not preferred thyſelf before him, for that would ill become thee. Dear children, be on your guard againſt this ſubtle ſelf-ſeeking of nature, that ye do not fulfil good works of piety for the ſake of any earthly reward; for that has ſomewhat of the nature of ſimony, a ſin which the holy Church abhors above all others, and which is eſpecially contrary to God's righteouſneſs; for God is by His nature the end of all things, and thou ſetteſt in His ſtead, as the end of thy works, an evil, mean, periſhable thing.

We muſt do our duty for the ſake of duty, and leave the reward to God.

We ſhould ſeek God's righteouſneſs, but this is contrary to His righteouſneſs; therefore, children, beware of this evil principle within you, and ſeek the Kingdom of God and His righteouſneſs; that is to ſay, ſeek God alone, who is the true Kingdom for which we and all men daily pray when we ſay the Lord's Prayer. Children, the Lord's Prayer is a mighty prayer: ye know not what ye pray for in it. God is Himſelf the Kingdom, and in that Kingdom He reigns in all intelligent creatures. Therefore what we aſk for is God Himſelf with all His riches. In that Kingdom does God become our Father, and manifeſts there His fatherly faithfulneſs and fatherly power. And inſomuch as He finds place in us to work, is His name hallowed, and magnified, and made known. That His name ſhould be hallowed in us, means that He ſhould reign in us, and accompliſh through us His rightful work. And thus is His will done here on earth as it is in heaven; that is, when it is done in us as it is in Himſelf, in the heaven which He Himſelf is. Oh! how often does man give himſelf up in will to God, and take himſelf back again as quickly, and fall away from God! But now begin again, and give thyſelf to Him afreſh; yield thyſelf captive to the Divine Will in rightful allegiance, and truſt thyſelf to the power of thy Father, who has all power and might, and whoſe preſence thou haſt ſo often and ſo plainly felt, and art yet made to feel every day and hour. Truſt Him wholly, and ſeek His righteouſneſs. For therein is His righteouſneſs ſhown, that He abideth ever with thoſe who heartily ſeek Him, and make Him their end, and give themſelves up to Him. In

The Kingdom of God for which we pray is that He ſhould reign in the hearts of us and all men.

What it means to pray "Thy will "be done," &c.

ſuch He reigns, and all vain care falls away of itſelf in thoſe who thus keep cloſe to God in true ſelf-ſurrender.

We are not to tempt God by neglecting due prudence.

Not that we ſhould tempt God; for it is our duty to exerciſe a reaſonable prudence in providing ſuch things as are right, to the ſupply of our neceſſities and thoſe of others, and profitable to ourſelves and the community, and to ſee that everything be done in a diſcreet and ſeemly manner. But that which is your end when you ſit and meditate in the church, ſhould be likewiſe your end when you are buſied in all the affairs of daily life; whether you work, or ſpeak, or eat, or drink, waking and ſleeping, do all to the glory of God, and not for thyſelf. For a noble man will make theſe periſhing things of time a mere paſſage-way by which he will aſcend through the creatures, not being held down by any ſelfiſh cleaving to them, up to his everlaſting home, his eternal ſource from which he ſprang at his creation.

Wherefore God ofttimes ſeemeth to forſake thoſe that truſt Him.

Now ſome may aſk, how we can ſay that God forſakes none that truſt Him, ſeeing that He often permits good men to ſuffer great poverty and affliction. This He does, as Biſhop Albert ſays, for three cauſes: the firſt, that He may try them, and ſee whether they utterly believe and truſt Him; thus God often ſuffers men to be brought into diſtreſs that he may teach them ſubmiſſion, and then ſuccours them that they may perceive His hand and His friendſhip and help; in order that their love and gratitude may increaſe from that time forth, and they may draw cloſer to God and become dearer to Him. Or again, God will by theſe troubles ſhorten their purification hereafter;

or again, He ſends them diſtreſs for a judgment on thoſe who might relieve them and do it not. Therefore, children, ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, which is God Himſelf, and nought elſe. When this cleaving to the creature is altogether caſt off, then will the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven, and ſo ſhall the Father have the power and the glory for ever in heaven, that is, in His Sons. For when man ſtands thus, having no end, nor purpoſe, nor deſire but God, then does he himſelf become God's Kingdom, and God reigns in him. And then does the Eternal King ſit on His royal throne, and command and govern in man.

How the man is tranſformed into the image of God when the Kingdom of God cometh in his ſoul.

This Kingdom is ſeated properly in the inmoſt receſſes of the ſpirit. When, through all manner of exerciſes, the outward man has been converted into the inward, reaſonable man, and thus the two, that is to ſay, the powers of the ſenſes and the powers of the reaſon, are gathered up into the very centre of the man's being,— the unſeen depths of his ſpirit, wherein lies the image of God,—and thus he flings himſelf into the Divine abyſs, in which he dwelt eternally before he was created; then when God finds the man thus ſimply and nakedly turned towards Him, the Godhead bends down and deſcends into the depths of the pure, waiting ſoul, and transforms the created ſoul, drawing it up into the uncreated eſſence, ſo that the ſpirit becomes one with Him. Could ſuch a man behold himſelf, he would ſee himſelf ſo noble that he would fancy himſelf God, and ſee himſelf a thouſand times nobler than he is in himſelf, and would perceive all the thoughts and purpoſes, words and

works, and have all the knowledge of all men that ever were.

Do we ſincerely wiſh to enter into this Kingdom?

Now thou ſhouldeſt look into the bottom of thy heart, and ſee whether thou wouldeſt fain enter into this Kingdom, and partake of this high dignity. Then were all thy cares over and gone for ever! This is the Kingdom which we are told to ſeek firſt; and this is righteouſneſs, that we ſhould ſet God before us, the rightful end of all our purpoſes in all our doings, and truſt in Him. For as we can never love God too well, ſo we can never truſt Him too much, if it be but the right ſort of truſt, that caſts all care upon Him, as Peter bids us do.

How the bond of inward peace is the common love towards all, working as Chriſt's love worked.

Now St. Paul tells us, however, that we muſt be careful to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace. Children, that peace which is found in the ſpirit and the inner life is well worth our care, for in that peace lies the ſatisfaction of all our wants. In it the Kingdom of God is diſcovered and His righteouſneſs is found. This peace a man ſhould allow nothing to take from him, whatever betide, come weal or woe, honour or ſhame. But ever keep thy inward man in the bond of peace, which conſiſts in the common love of all to all; and ſet before you the lovely example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ſee how His love wrought, leading Him to endure greater ſufferings than all the ſaints or all mankind ever endured. For He was all His life more utterly deſtitute of conſolation than any man ever was, and ended it by the bittereſt death that man ever died; and yet in His higheſt powers He was never leſs bleſſed than He is at this moment. Now thoſe who are moſt truly followers of Him in

emptineſs of outward conſolation, and in true poverty, inward and outward, having no refuge or ſtay, and in no wiſe clinging to the creature, or ſeeking themſelves, theſe come to diſcover, in the trueſt and nobleſt ſort, the Kingdom of God. And this is God's righteouſneſs, that He will give us to find His Kingdom by treading in Chriſt's footſteps, in true ſelf-ſurrender and willing poorneſs of ſpirit. That we may all ſo ſeek the Kingdom of God as truly to find it, may He help us. Amen.



XXV.

Sermon for St. Stephen's Day.

Of three grades of thoſe who learn to die unto themſelves, like a corn of wheat, that they may bring forth fruit; or of thoſe who are beginners, thoſe who are advancing, and thoſe who are perfect in a Divine life.

JOHN xii. 24.—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but "if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

How the corn of wheat that dieth is a type of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who died to bring forth fruit, and how we muſt likewiſe die.

BY the corn of wheat we underſtand our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who by His death has brought forth much fruit for all men, if they are but willing not only to reign with Him, but alſo and in the firſt place deſire to follow Him in a dying life. For this may be called a dying life, when a man for the love of God refuſes to gratify his ſenſes and take his natural pleaſure, and follow his own will; and as many luſts as he dies to, ſo many deaths does he offer to God, and ſo many fruits of life will he receive in return. For in what meaſure a man dies to himſelf, and grows out of himſelf, in the ſame meaſure does God, who is our Life, enter into him.

Of the three ſtages of a dying life.

Now mark, dear children, that the path of a man thus dying may be divided into three ſtages. Thoſe who have entered on the loweſt ſtage, do acts of ſelf-

Of the firſt ſtage of thoſe who die to earthly pleaſures for the ſake of a reward in heaven.

denial from fear of hell, and for the hope of heaven, with ſome love to God mingled therewith, which leads them to ſhun the moſt flagrant ſins; but the love of God ſeldom works ſtrongly in them, except it be ſtirred up by the contemplation of hell or heaven; for by reaſon of their blind ſelf-love theſe men are terribly afraid of death, and by no means eager to ſet their hand to the work of mortifying their undiſciplined nature, which ſhrinks therefrom; and they have little faith, which is the cauſe of this timorous weakneſs, that leads them to be ever fearing for their own ſafety: thus, juſt as formerly they ſought and loved themſelves in all kinds of carnal enjoyments and worldly vanities, and avoided bodily pain and inconvenience out of ſelf-love, ſo now is the ſame motive at work leading them to ſhun ſin on account of puniſhment, in order to eſcape hell, and obtain the rewards of heaven. And when they are ſtill young in the love of God, they are apt to taſte little ſweetneſs in loving God, ſave when they hope to enjoy ſomething from His love; as for inſtance, to eſcape hell and get to heaven; and if ſometimes they meditate on the ſufferings of our Lord, and weep over them with ſtrong emotion, it is becauſe they think how he was willing to ſuffer ſo much for their ſakes, and to redeem them by his bitter death; ſtill (becauſe their love is ſmall) they are much more inclined to dwell upon the bodily ſufferings that He endured in His human nature, than to reflect how He manifeſted by His death the higheſt perfection of all virtue, as humility, love, and patience, and therein ſo greatly glorified His Heavenly Father. For this ſort of per-

ſons ſet out and begin to die while as yet they love themſelves far too well; hence they are not yet able to ſee truly what it is to reſign themſelves to God, and to maintain a ſpirit of ſubmiſſion; and although God does all things for the beſt, yet this they will never believe, and it is a perpetual ſtumbling-block to them. Thus, they often aſk and wonder why our Lord choſe to ſuffer ſo much, and why He leads His friends and followers to Himſelf along ſuch a path of ſuffering. And when they are at the outſet of a dying life, and only half-way inclined towards true perfectneſs, nor perceive as yet wherein this conſiſts, they ofttimes torment themſelves with watching and faſting, and an auſtere way of life; for whatever is outwardly painful to the fleſh, they fancy to be greatly and mightily regarded and prized by God. So when they eagerly take upon themſelves all the hardſhips they can, then they think they have reached the ſummit of perfection, and judge all other men, nay even thoſe who are much more perfect than themſelves, and think meanly of all who do not practiſe outward auſterities, calling them low-minded and ignorant in ſpiritual things; and thoſe who do not feel as they do, they think to have gone aſtray altogether from a ſpiritual courſe, and deſire that all men ſhould be as they are; and whatever methods of avoiding ſin they have practiſed and ſtill make uſe of by reaſon of their infirmity, they deſire, nay, demand, that every one elſe ſhould obſerve; and if any do not do ſo, they judge them, and murmur at them, and ſay that they pay no regard to religion. Now, while they thus keep themſelves and all that belongs to them as it

How that it is a ſign of a beginner to think much of auſterities, and judge thoſe who practiſe them not.

were working in their own ſervice, and in this ſelf-love unduly regard themſelves as their own property, they cut themſelves off from our Lord and from the univerſal charity. For they ought to cheriſh continually a general love toward all men, both good and bad; but they remain abſorbed in their partial and ſeparate affections, whereby they bring upon themſelves much diſquiet, and remain a prey to their beſetting ſin of always ſeeking and intending themſelves. And they are very niggardly of their ſpiritual bleſſings towards their fellow-Chriſtians; for they devote all their prayers and religious exerciſes to their own behoof; and if they pray or do any other kind act for others, they think it a great thing, and fancy they have done them a great ſervice thereby. In ſhort, as they look little within, and are little enlightened in the knowledge of themſelves, ſo alſo they make little increaſe in the love of God and their neighbour; for they are ſo entangled with unregulated affections, that they live alone in heart, not thoroughly commingling their ſoul with any in the right ſort of thorough love. For the love of God which ought to unite them to God and all mankind, is wanting in them; and although they appear to keep the ordinances of God and the Holy Church, they do not keep the law of love. What they do is more out of conſtraint and fear than from hearty love; and becauſe they are inwardly unfaithful to God, they dare not truſt Him, for the imperfection which they find in themſelves makes a flaw in their love to God. Hence their whole life is full of care, full of fear, full of toil and ignoble miſery; for they ſee Eternal Life on the one

How ſuch do lack a generous univerſal love, and rather do right from fear.

ſide, and fear to loſe it, and ſee hell on the other, and fear to fall into it; and all their prayers and religious exerciſes cannot chaſe away their fear of hell, ſo long as they do not die unto themſelves. For the more they love themſelves, and take counſel for their own welfare, the more the fear of hell grows upon them; inſomuch that when God does not help them forward as much as they wiſh, they complain; and they weep and ſigh at every little difficulty they encounter, however ſmall, ſuch as being tempted to vanity, wandering thoughts, and the like. They make long ſtories of what is of no conſequence, and talk about their great difficulties and ſufferings, as if they were grievouſly wronged; for they eſteem their works, although ſmall, to be highly meritorious, and that God Almighty owes them great honour and bleſſings in return. But our Lord will tell them (as He does in fact afterward, when He has enlightened them with His grace) a poor fool loves his own wooden ſtick, or any other little worthleſs article, as well as a rich and wiſe man does his ſword or any other great and precious thing.

Wherefore they are grievouſly oppreſſed with their own infirmities, and with the fear of hell.

All ſuch are ſtanding on the loweſt ſteps of a dying life, and if they do not mortify themſelves more, and come to experience more of what a dying life is, it is to be feared, that they will fall back from that little whereunto they have attained, and may plunge into depths of folly and wickedneſs, from which God keep us all! But before a man comes to ſuch a fall, God gives him great ſpiritual delight; and upon this he is ſo greatly rejoiced that he cheerfully endures all ſorts of auſterities and penances, and then he weeneth that he hath arrived at perfection, and

How that God often ſuffereth ſuch to fall terribly, that He may teach them ſelf-

knowledge and ſhow His mercy upon them.

begins to judge his neighbours, and wants to ſhape all men after his own model, ſo greatly does he eſteem himſelf in his own conceits. Then God comes in His mercy to teach him what he is, and ſhows him into what error he has fallen, and permits the Enemy to ſet before him and make him taſte the ſweetneſs of ſin; and then, when he has thus taſted, he conceives an inclination to one ſin after another, and he cannot rid himſelf of theſe inclinations. Then he wiſhes to flee ſin that he may eſcape hell, and begins to do outward good works; and yet it is a dreadful toil to perform theſe good works as a mere labour, and to put himſelf to pain; thus he is brought into an agonizing ſtruggle with himſelf, and does not know which way to turn; for he dimly ſees that he has gone aſtray. Then muſt God of His mercy come and raiſe him up, and he ſhall cry earneſtly to God for help, and his chief meditation ſhall be on the life and works and eſpecially the ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Of the ſecond degree of a dying life, when a man is perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake.

The ſecond degree in which the corn of wheat dies, is when a man is called upon to endure inſult, contempt, and ſuch like deaths; and ſo long as his grace laſts he would fain continue to ſuffer, for by the ſenſe of undeſerved injury all his powers are but quickened and raiſed into a higher ſtate of activity. But when he is bereft of this gracious ſenſe of the Divine preſence, foraſmuch as he is ſtill far from perfection, he cannot bear up under this ſpiritual deſtitution, and, through his infirmity, falls a prey to miſtruſt of God, and fancies that God has forgotten him, and is not willing to help him towards perfection. Often

he is in a hundred minds what to do or not do, and if our Lord ſhow him ſome kindneſs, then he feels as if all were well between his ſoul and God, and he feels himſelf ſo rich as if he could never more be poor, and thinks to enjoy the preſence and favour of God (though as yet he is quite untried) juſt as if the Almighty were his own perſonal, ſpecial friend, and is ready to believe that our Lord is, ſo to ſpeak, at his diſpoſal, will comfort him in adverſity, and enrich him with all virtue. But foraſmuch as our gracious Lord ſees that ſuch a man will be very apt to rely upon his imagined powers, and thus to fall grievouſly, and ſees alſo that the beſt and ripeſt fruit is being loſt, inaſmuch as the man has not yet attained to that perfection to which our Lord deſires to lead him, therefore in due time He withdraws from him all that He had revealed to him, becauſe the man was too much occupied with himſelf, with thinking about his own perfection, wiſdom, holineſs and virtues; He thus brings him through poverty to diſſatiſfaction with himſelf, and a humble acknowledgment that he has neither wiſdom nor worthineſs; then does he begin to reflect within himſelf how juſtly Almighty God has ſtayed His hand from beſtowing any ſenſible tokens of His mercy, becauſe he fancied that he was ſomething; now he ſees clearly that he is nothing. He was wont to care for his good name and honour in the world and to defend them as a man ſtands up for his wedded wife, and to count them who ſpoke evil of him as an enemy to the common good. He was wont to deſire and thirſt after the reputation of holineſs, like a meadow after the dew of

Of God's hidden dealings with a man, by which he learns that he is nothing.

heaven. He weened that men's praiſes of him had proceeded altogether from real goodneſs and ſympathy of heart and by God's ordination, and had wandered ſo far from ſelf-knowledge as not to ſee that he was in himſelf unſound from head to foot; he fancied that he was really as he ſtood in man's opinion and knew nothing to the contrary.

How we muſt examine ourſelves under perſecutions, whether we are patient, praiſing God and man, and truly loving our enemies.

Here we muſt mark that he who wiſhes to heal himſelf of ſuch like grievous miſtakes, and ſubdue ſuch an unmortified nature, muſt take note of three points in himſelf. Firſt, how much he has ſtriven to endure cheerfully, for the ſake of goodneſs, all the rebuke, ſlander, and ſhame that has come upon him, patiently enduring it in his heart without outward complaint. Secondly, how much in the time of his rebuke, ſhame, and diſtreſs he has praiſed and glorified God and his fellow-men, and ſhown kindneſs to his neighbour in all ways, in ſpite of all contradiction againſt himſelf. Thirdly, let him examine himſelf whether he have loved with cheerful and willing heart the men or creatures who have thus perſecuted him, and ſincerely prayed for them; and if he finds that he has not done ſo, and is unwilling to do ſo, but is hard and bitter in his grief, then he may ſurely know and ought to feel certain that there is ſomething falſe in him, and ſome reſting in the praiſe of men and in his own ſpiritual pride, and that he is not dead. He has not yet come to the ſecond ſtep in a dying life.

But our kind Lord, like a tender mother who is full of love, or a wiſe phyſician who deſires to reſtore a ſick man to perfect health by his powerful remedies, ſuffers him to fall many times, that he may learn to

know himſelf, and thus he falls into fleſhly, unſpiritual temptations ſuch as he never experienced in thoſe paſt days, in which he fancied himſelf very good and ſpiritual-minded. Out of mercy God deprives him of all underſtanding, and overclouds all the light in which he walked aforetime, and ſo hedges him in with the thorns of an anguiſhed conſcience, that he thinks nothing elſe but that he is caſt off from the light of God's countenance; and he moans greatly, and often with many tears exclaims: "O, my God, why haſt "Thou caſt me off, and why go I thus mourning "all the days of my pilgrimage?"

How God ſometimes ſuffers carnal temptations to beſet ſuch a man,

And when he finds himſelf thus from the crown of his head to the ſole of his foot unlike God, and at variance with Him, he is filled with the ſenſe of his own unworthineſs and with diſpleaſure at himſelf, inſomuch that he can hardly abide himſelf; and then he thinks many miſerable things about himſelf from paſſages of Holy Scripture, and ſheds many tears in the ſenſe of his ſinfulneſs, till he is weighed down to the earth with the preſſure of God's hand, and exclaims with the Prophet: "My ſins are more in "number than the ſands of the ſea; they have taken "hold upon me that I am not able to look up; for I "have ſtirred up God's anger againſt me, and done "much evil in His ſight." Theſe things he ſaith, and more of the like. And at times he is not even able thus to weep and lament and then he is ſtill more tormented with tribulation and aſſaults; for on the one hand he feels a ſtrong deſire to caſt himſelf down humbly and die to himſelf, and on the other he is conſcious of great pride and arrogance about himſelf, till he is ſo

wherefore he is brought into ſuch great diſtreſs and anger at himſelf,

that he could fain deſtroy himſelf, and is well-nigh in deſpair.

exaſperated at himſelf, that but for the diſhonour to God he could fain kill himſelf. I believe that all ſuch conflict greatly wears out the intellectual and natural powers, for it is ſo exceſſive, that one would rather ſuffer oneſelf to be put to death than endure it. Yet one grace is left him, namely, that he looks on it all as of no moment, whatever may be poured out over him, if only he may not knowingly offend God. After a while the grace of tears comes back to him, and he cries to God and ſays: "O Lord, ariſe! why "ſleepeſt Thou?" and aſks Him why He hath ſealed up the fountains of His mercy. He calls upon the holy angels and bleſſed ſpirits to have pity on him. He aſks the heavens why they have become as braſs, and the earth wherefore ſhe is as iron, and beſeeches the very ſtones to have compaſſion on his woes. He exclaims: "Am I become as the blaſted hill of "Gilboa, which was curſed of David that no dew "or rain ſhould fall on it? And how ſhould my "wickedneſs alone vanquiſh the invincible God, and "force Him to ſhut up His mercies whoſe property it "is to have mercy and to help?"

How that God ſo exerciſes a man that He may purify him wholly,

In the ſecond ſtage of the dying life God leads the ſoul through theſe exerciſes and operations of His hand as through fire and water by turns, until the workings of ſelf-ſufficiency are driven out from all the ſecret corners of the ſpirit, and the man henceforward is ſo utterly aſhamed of himſelf, and ſo caſts himſelf off, that he can never more aſcribe any greatneſs to himſelf, but thoroughly perceives all his own weakneſs, in which he now is and always has been; and whatever he does or deſires to do, or whatever good

thing may be ſaid of him, he does not take it to his own credit, for he knows not how to ſay anything elſe of himſelf, but that he is full of all manner of infirmity. Then he has reached the end of this ſtage; and he who has arrived at this point is not far from the threſhold of great mercies, by which he ſhall enter into the bride-chamber of Chriſt. Then when the day of his death ſhall come, he ſhall be brought in by the Bridegroom with great rejoicing.

and bring him to unſpeakable mercies.

It is hard to die. We know that little trees do not ſtrike their roots deep into the earth, and therefore they cannot ſtand long; ſo it is with all humble hearts, who do not take deep root in earth, but in heaven. But the great trees which have waxed high, and are intended to endure long upon the earth, theſe ſtrike their roots deep, and ſpread them out wide into the ſoil. So it is with the men who in old times and now at this preſent have been great upon earth, they muſt needs through many a ſtruggle and death, die unto themſelves before all the ſelf-ſufficiency of their heart can be broken down, and they can be ſurely and firmly rooted for ever in humility. It does, however, happen ſometimes that the Holy Spirit finds eaſier ways than thoſe of which we have ſpoken, whereby He brings ſuch ſouls to Himſelf.

How this dying life is hardeſt for thoſe who are great upon earth.

The third degree in which the corn of wheat dies belongs only to the perfect, who, with unflagging diligence and ceaſeleſs deſire, are ever ſtriving to approach perfection. Theſe men's ſtate is one of mingled joy and ſorrow, whereby they are toſſed up and down; for the Holy Spirit is trying and ſifting them, and preparing them for perfection, with two kinds of

Of the third ſtage of a dying life;

the ſtate of thoſe who are unceaſingly aſpiring towards perfection, and all whoſe griefs and joys are a ſympathy with Chriſt.

grief and two kinds of joy and happineſs, which they have ever in their ſight. The firſt grief is an inward pain and an overwhelming ſorrow of heart, in the ſenſe of the unſpeakable wrong done to the Holy Trinity by all creatures, and ſpecially by the bad Chriſtians who are living in mortal ſin. The ſecond grief conſiſts in their fellow-feeling for and experience of all the grief and pain which the human nature of Chriſt has undergone.

The firſt of the two joys lies in this dying; it is a clear intuition and a perfect fruition to which they are raiſed in Chriſt by the power of the Holy Spirit, that they may enjoy the fruition of Him, and triumph in all the joys which they hope and believe after this life to behold in all their perfect fulneſs. The ſecond triumph is that they are fulfilled in all the joys which the human nature of Chriſt poſſeſſed. This joy ſuch a man hopes to ſhare as a member of Chriſt; and even if he cannot fathom the abyſs of God, he rejoices therein, for he ſees that the overflowings of God's mercy are unſpeakable, and feels that it is good for him that he is vanquiſhed in the effort to comprehend God's power, and bends down beneath God in his ſelf-dying.

To this none can attain except he be emptied of ſelf and filled with the Holy Spirit.

To this ſtate a man cannot attain except he unite his will with God, with an entire renunciation and perfect denial of himſelf, and all ſelfiſh love of himſelf; and all delight in having his own will be over-maſtered and quenched by the ſhedding abroad in his heart of the Holy Spirit in the love of God, ſo that it ſeem as though the Holy Spirit Himſelf were the man's will and love, and he were nothing and willed nothing on his own account. Yea, even the king-

dom of heaven he ſhall deſire for God's ſake and God's glory, becauſe Chriſt hath earned it in order to ſupply his needs, and chooſeth to beſtow it on him as one of His ſons. When in this ſtage, a man loveth all things in their right order, God above all things, —next the bleſſed (human) nature of Chriſt, and after that the bleſſed Mother of Chriſt, and the ſaints of all degrees, each according to the rank which God hath enabled him to attain. When his affections are thus regulated, he ſets himſelf in the loweſt place at the wedding-feaſt of the Bridegroom. And when the Bridegroom comes who has bidden him to the feaſt, He ſaith unto him: "Friend go up higher." Then he is endowed with a new life, and illuminated with a new light, in the which he clearly perceives and ſees, that he alone is the cauſe of his own evil, that he cannot, with truth, throw the blame either on nature, the world, or the devil. Yea, he confeſſes that God has appointed him all theſe exerciſes and aſſaults out of His great love, in order that he may glorify God in overcoming theſe, and deſerve a higher crown. Further, he perceives and ſees, that it is God alone who has upheld him, and ſtayed his ſteps, ſo that he has no longer an inclination to ſin, and who has removed the occaſion to ſin that he might not fall. Yea what is ſtill worſe, he is forced to confeſs that he has often been diſſatiſfied that he was not able to derive more enjoyment from his ſins. Thus all his being is ſwallowed up in ſorrow and remorſe for that he is ſtill laden with his boundleſs infirmity.

How that ſuch an one loveth all things in their right order.

But he hath delight and joy in that he ſeeth that the goodneſs of God is as great as his neceſſities, ſo

Of his delight in God's

unfathomable goodneſs.

Of the griefs and joys of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

that his life may well be called a dying life by reaſon of ſuch his griefs and joys which are conformable and like unto the life of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which from beginning to end was always made up of mingled grief and joy. Grief, in that He left His heavenly throne and came down into this world; joy, in that He was not ſevered from the glory and honour of the Father. Grief, in that He was a Son of Man; joy, in that He nevertheleſs was and remained the Son of God. Grief, becauſe He took upon Him the office of a ſervant; joy, in that He was nevertheleſs a great Lord. Grief, becauſe in human nature He was mortal, and died upon the croſs; joy, becauſe He was immortal according to His Godhead. Grief, in His birth, in that He was once born of His mother; joy, in that He is the only-begotten of God's heart from everlaſting to everlaſting. Grief, becauſe He became in Time ſubject to Time; joy, becauſe He was Eternal before all Time, and ſhall be ſo for ever. Grief, in that the Word was born into the fleſh, and hath dwelt in us; joy, in that the Word was in the beginning with God, and God Himſelf was the Word. Grief, in that it behoved Him to be baptized like any human ſinner by St. John the Baptiſt in the Jordan; joy, in that the voice of His Heavenly Father ſaid of Him: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed." Grief, in that like others, ſinners, He was tempted of the Enemy; joy, in that the angels came and miniſtered unto Him. Grief, in that He ofttimes endured hunger and thirſt; joy, becauſe He is Himſelf the food of men and angels. Grief, in that He was often wearied with His labours; joy, becauſe He is the reſt of all loving hearts and

bleſſed ſpirits. Grief, foraſmuch as His holy life and ſufferings ſhould remain in vain for ſo many human beings; joy, becauſe He ſhould thereby ſave His friends. Grief, in that He muſt needs aſk to drink water of the heathen woman at the well; joy, in that He gave to that ſame woman to drink of living water, ſo that ſhe ſhould never thirſt again. Grief, in that He was wont to ſail in ſhips over the ſea; joy, becauſe He was wont to walk dry-ſhod upon the waves. Grief, in that He wept with Martha and Mary over Lazarus; joy, in that He raiſed their brother Lazarus from the dead. Grief, in that He was nailed to the croſs with nails; joy, in that He promiſed paradiſe to the thief by His ſide. Grief, in that He thirſted when hanging on the croſs; joy, in that He ſhould thereby redeem His elect from eternal thirſt. Grief, when He ſaid, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" joy, in that He would with theſe words comfort all ſad hearts. Grief, in that His ſoul was parted from His body, and He died and was buried; joy, becauſe on the third day He roſe again from the dead with a glorified body.

How that His life is a teſtament unto us.

Thus was all His life, from the manger to the croſs, a mingled web of grief and joy. Which life He hath left as a ſacred teſtament to His followers in this preſent time, who are converted unto His dying life, that they may remember Him when they drink of His cup, and walk as He hath walked! May God help us ſo to do! Amen.

XXVI.

Sermon for St. Peter's Day.

Of brotherly rebuke and admonition, how far it is adviſable and ſeemly or not, and especially how prelates and governors ought to demean themſelves toward their ſubjects.

2 Tim. iv. 2.—"Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine."

How that all paſtors and magiſtrates ſhould poſſeſs long-ſuffering and doctrine, and rebuke ſinners to bring them to amendment.

THIS is the leſſon which St. Paul gives to his beloved diſciple Timothy, whom he ſet to rule over men, and it equally behoves all paſtors of ſouls and magiſtrates, to poſſeſs theſe two things, — long-ſuffering and doctrine.

Firſt, it is their office to rebuke all open ſinners, whom they may poſſibly bring to a better way, and eſpecially thoſe over whom they are ſet in authority, that they may reveal the truth unto them, for this is needful, and in many places Scripture doth tell us how we ought to teach, rebuke, and exhort thoſe who are committed to our charge, each according to the office which he holds, as St. Gregory has ſufficiently ſhown and ſet forth in his Paſtoral, wherefore we will refrain for the preſent from ſaying more on that point.

How that they muſt alſo

But we will rather turn to the ſecond point, which is more ſpiritual, teaching a man to look within and

judge himſelf, ſeeing that he who deſires to become a ſpiritual man muſt not be ever taking note of others, and above all of their ſins, leſt he fall into wrath and bitterneſs, and a judging ſpirit towards his neighbours. O children, this works ſuch great miſchief in a man's ſoul, as it is miſerable to think of; wherefore, as you love God, ſhun this evil temper, and turn your eyes full upon yourſelves, and ſee if you cannot diſcover the ſame fault in yourſelves, either in times paſt or now-a-days. And if you find it, remember how that it is God's appointing that you ſhould now behold this ſin in another in order that you may be brought to acknowledge and repent of it; and amend your ways and pray for your brother that God may grant him repentance and amendment, according to His Divine Will. Thus a good heart draws amendment from the ſins of others, and is guarded from all harſh judgment and wrath, and preſerves an even temper, while an evil heart puts the worſt interpretation on all that it ſees and turns it to its own hurt. Thus is a good man able to maintain inviolate a due love and loyalty towards his fellow-man. Further, this generous love makes him hold others innocent in his heart: even when he ſees infirmity or fault in his neighbour, he reflects that very likely all is not as it ſeems on the outſide, but the act may have been done with a good intention; or elſe he thinks that God may have permitted it to take place for an admonition and leſſon to himſelf; or again, as an opportunity for him to exerciſe ſelf-control and to learn to die unto himſelf, by the patient endurance of and forbearance towards the faults of his neighbours, even as God has often borne

look within and judge themſelves, and put the beſt interpretation they can upon the conduct of others,

and have

patience with their ſins.

many wrongs from him, and had patience with his ſins. And this would often tend more to his neighbour's improvement than all the efforts he could make for it in the way of reproofs or chaſtiſements, even if they were done in love (though indeed we often imagine that our reproofs are given in love when it is in truth far otherwiſe). For I tell thee, dear child, if thou couldſt conquer thyſelf by long-ſuffering and gentleneſs and the pureneſs of thy heart, thou wouldſt have vanquiſhed all thine enemies. It would be better for thee than if thou hadſt won the hearts of all the world by thy writings and wiſdom, and hadſt miſerably deſtroyed thine own ſoul by paſſing judgment on thy neighbours; for the Lord ſays: "And why be-"holdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, "but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own "eye?"

The ſpirit and mode in which rebuke ſhould be adminiſtered.

In thus ſpeaking, I except thoſe who are bound by their office in the holy Chriſtian Church to rebuke others. Let them wiſely beware how they reprove, and for what cauſes, ſo that they rebuke none with an irritable demeanour, or with harſh and angry words, from which much trouble and toil do ſpring, for that they have no right to do, but it is permitted to them to reprove thoſe who are under them for their own amendment. But alas! it happens for the moſt part now-a-days that thoſe who occupy the higheſt places do often and greatly forget themſelves in theſe reſpects, and hence their rebukes do not produce any amendment, but only anger and alienation of heart. For if they were to inſtruct thoſe who are under their care in the fear of God, in ſuch wiſe that the people could

mark and be ſure that it was done ſolely for the ſaving of their ſouls, they would be much the more ready to ſet themſelves to amend, and would be content,—but now, alas! they ſee that their ſuperiors are only ſeeking their own glory and profit, and taking upon themſelves wrongfully to keep them down and defraud them of their juſt rights, and therefore reproof only makes them the more refractory and indignant. And there are many in authority who do really believe that they rebuke thoſe under them from a reverence for righteouſneſs, and yet are doing it from a wrathful, domineering, and arrogant ſpirit; and what they think they are doing from hatred to ſin, they are doing from hatred to men.

Of the danger of miſtaking our impatience and wrath for a zeal for righteouſneſs.

But I beſeech you examine yourſelves, whether you do in truth love thoſe whom you are puniſhing ſo bitterly out of reverence and zeal for righteouſneſs as you ſuppoſe. For when we ſee men puniſhing and oppreſſing with ſuch vehemence thoſe who are under them, or treating them ſo harſhly with ſharp words and ſour looks, it is to be feared that there is more reproof given out of crabbed impatience, than for the ſake of righteouſneſs from the true ground of charity and kindneſs, eſpecially by thoſe who have not yet experienced the inward joy of hearty ſweetneſs and godly love: for the ſoul that has not yet experienced inward love and divine ſweetneſs does not know how to hold a diſcreet mien and juſt language in rebuking; but genuine love teaches us how we ought to treat thoſe who are worthy of puniſhment.

How that ſuperiors ſhould

Now let him who has to puniſh in virtue of his office firſt take account of God's diſhonour and the

conſider, and not take their own revenge, and puniſh with gentleneſs.

injury done to the ſouls of his flock, and then rebuke with ſweet, loving words and patient demeanour and geſtures, ſo that the weak ſhall be able to mark that he is ſeeking and purpoſing their welfare alone, and nothing elſe. And if in the diſpenſations of God's Providence it ſhould happen that thoſe who are ſubject ſhould at times riſe up and offend by licenſe and preſumptuous irreverence againſt their ſuperiors, the latter ought not in any wiſe to regard or revenge it, ſo far as that may be, without ſcandal to the reſt of their ſubjects; for if they revenge themſelves they fall under ſuſpicion of ſelfiſh motives, and it is likely that God will not be able to work any fruit through them; but they muſt rather treat ſuch offenders with more patience, kinder words and acts, than they do others. For this is commonly the greateſt temptation which befalls thoſe in authority, by which they for the moſt either win or loſe the greateſt reward of their labours; wherefore they ſhould ever be on their guard, for gentleneſs and a readineſs to forgive injuries is the beſt virtue that a ruler can poſſeſs.

How they ſhould love all, without unjuſt partiality, and guide their flock into virtue.

They ſhall ſhow no partiality in their affections, neither for their own glory nor yet towards particular perſons, but they ſhall embrace all their flock in the arms of a common love, as a mother does her children. To the weak they ſhould ever ſhow the greateſt love and care, and without ceaſing lift up their hearts unto God in prayer, earneſtly beſeeching Him to guard and defend the people committed to their charge, and not indulging in any ſelf-glorification. Likewiſe, ſo far as it reſts with them, let them be the firſt to do

ſuch works as they would wiſh to ſee their people do: for ſo it ſtands, that, with the help of God, all may be accompliſhed to a good end, when thoſe in authority are inclined to virtue, for then their ſubjects muſt needs follow as they lead, even though they may have been beforehand inclined to all evil and vice, and hoſtile to their ſuperiors.

How thoſe who are not governors ſhould not take upon themſelves to judge others.

But for thoſe who have received no commiſſion to govern other men, but ſtand in a private character without office, it is needful that they ſecretly judge themſelves inwardly, and beware of judging all things without, for in ſuch judgments we do commonly err, and the true poſition of things is generally very far otherwiſe from that which it appears to us, as we often come to diſcover afterwards. On this point remember the proverb: "He is a wiſe man who can "turn all things to the beſt."

May God help us ſo to do! Amen.

XXVII.

Sermon on a Martyr's Day.

Of three ſorts of ſpiritual temptation by which holy men are ſecretly aſſailed; to wit: ſpiritual unchaſtity, covetouſneſs, and pride.

JAMES, i. 12.—"Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he ſhall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love Him."

How that this life is full of temptation, but it is all for our profit.

ALL our life (ſays Job), so long as we are upon earth, is full of ſtruggle and temptation, inſomuch that this life is not called a life by the Saints, but a temptation. When one temptation is over, ſtraightway others are awaiting us, and the cauſe is that our Lord will have us to go and bring forth fruit; and the fruit is to walk in the ways of God and go forward; for the fruit conſiſts in the very overcoming of temptation, from which we may draw out a hidden ſpiritual ſweetneſs, as the bees suck honey from the thorn-buſhes as well as from all other flowers. He who has not been tempted, knows nothing, nor lives as yet, ſay the wiſe man Solomon, and the holy teacher St. Bernard. We find more than a thouſand teſtimonies in Scripture to the great profit of temptation; for it is the ſpecial ſign of the love of God towards a man for him to be tempted and yet kept from falling; for thus he muſt and ſhall

of a certainty receive the crown, like the martyr whoſe death the Chriſtian Church commemorates this day, ſinging of him that he is bleſſed becauſe he hath endured temptation, and has been tried and proved therein, that he might receive the crown of life which the Lord has promiſed to them that love Him.

Of outward and carnal temptations.

Now obſerve, dear children, that there are two kinds of temptation. The one is carnal, and has its ſphere in the kingdom of ſenſe in this preſent life, as when a man is tempted through his outward ſenſes to ſeek his happineſs in other men, be they friends or relations, or any others, or to undue fondneſs for the outward ſhow of life, ſuch as dreſs, jewels, books, inſtruments, a pleaſant abode, and other tranſitory creatures, and wilfully cleaves thereunto with manifold affections, and they ſtick to him like burrs. At times our outward ſenſes are left in peace, and are quit of all aſſaults, yet is the man ſtrangely aſſaulted inwardly in his fleſh and blood by unſeemly thoughts; but, however impure may be theſe temptations, and however horrible they may look, they cannot of themſelves defile a man's purity. St. Gregory ſays: "Temptations do not defile a man except through "his own ſlackneſs and want of diligence in turning "aſide from them."

Of inward temptations in the intellect.

The other ſort of temptation is inward and ſpiritual, and has its ſeat in the realm of the intellect. The workings of the Spirit and of Nature are ſo mingled together and interwoven as long as we are in this preſent life, that all our inward exerciſes and converſe with God are carried on at the ſame time with all

the motions and workings of nature. Moreover, our Lord has ſo ordained it for our good, that the Evil Angel, Satan, has power to tranſform himſelf before the inward eye of the mind into an Angel of Light; and he does it moſt of all at thoſe times when a man gathers up all his powers to enter into communion with God. Obſerve, dear children, that St. John divides ſin into three kinds, when he ſays, all that is of the world is "the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of "the eyes, and the pride of life." As theſe three ſins that reign in the world exiſt together in the fleſh, ſo do they alſo reign inwardly in the mind, under a ſpiritual guiſe. Outward ſins are very clear and eaſy to ſee, if a man have a mind to watch himſelf; but theſe mental ſins are in many ways more covert, and can put on ſuch a good face, that we are often hardly aware of the grievous fall that is cloſe at hand.

1 *John, ii.* 16.

Of ſpiritual ſelf-ſeeking in the indulgence of emotion.

Now mark: it is to be counted as ſpiritual unchaſtity or wantonneſs, when a man ſeeks himſelf too much, and with eager deſire ſtrives after warmth and ſenſible devoutneſs, to the end that he may always be in a ſtate of contentment, and none may have a right to reprove him, though he ſhould give himſelf to his own ſpecial prayers and religious exerciſes, while leaving unfulfilled the work that is his duty. When ſuch an one has none of theſe ſweet emotions, he is quite troubled and becomes peeviſh and very impatient in the trifling miſhaps that befall him, though they are really of no importance whatever; and when he cannot enjoy or obtain inward peace according to his deſire, he complains of the great grievances and tempta-

tions which he has to endure. St. Bernard ſays that our Lord beſtows theſe graces of ſenſible emotion upon ſuch as have done nothing to deſerve them nor are worthy of them, but He does this in mercy, that He may draw ſuch to His love; and He withholds theſe gifts from ſome who have undergone long and painful exerciſes, and were well fit to receive them; yea from ſome He withholds them all their life long, but He will give them a great recompenſe for it in the next life. The reaſon of His thus withholding ſenſible delight is that our ſpiritual fruitfulneſs and higheſt bleſſedneſs do not lie therein, but in our inward truſting and clinging to God, in our not ſeeking ourſelves either in ſorrow or joy, but through joy and ſorrow devoting ourſelves to God, and like poor unworthy ſervants offering ourſelves to Him at our own coſts, though we ſhould have to ſerve Him thus for ever. Yet it may indeed be permitted to a young, weak Chriſtian, at the outſet of his courſe, to pray for ſuch graces or gifts from our good God, in order to be able to glorify Him with the greater activity, and to be grounded the more firmly in His love. But when we deſire ſuch inward fervours and ſweet peace (which are His gifts and not our deſerts) more for their own ſakes than the Giver Himſelf, we fall into ſpiritual wantonneſs and black diſloyalty, which our good Lord has not deſerved at our hands with His utter renunciation of Himſelf outwardly and inwardly.

Senſible delight in Divine things not beſtowed in proportion to our worthineſs or unworthineſs.

Spiritual covetouſneſs is when a man is always coveting to have more than bare neceſſaries while purſuing this earthly pilgrimage. For what more

Of ſpiritual covetouſneſs.

ſhould a pilgrim take with him by the way than ſuch things as are needful to ſuſtain him till he come ſafely to his home? Believe me, it is a great blemiſh in true outward poverty to deſire aught beyond neceſſaries; ſo likewiſe it is a ſtill greater blemiſh in the inward poverty of the ſpirit. Ah! who has ever been ſo poor as He, who, in utter poorneſs of ſpirit, ſtood forſaken by Heaven and by the creatures, caſt out alone in utter exile, when He ſent forth that bitter cry: "My God, my God! why haſt Thou "forſaken me?" And this was all that He might be an enſample unto us, to comfort our poverty and bereavement by teaching us true ſubmiſſion. I hear thee ſaying: "Yes; if it were not my own fault, and "if I had not failed to receive the bleſſing through "my own heedleſſneſs, or thrown it away by my own "guilty folly, I could bear it all the better; what "ſhould I then have to mourn over? But now it "is all my own doing: I have brought the miſchief "upon myſelf." I anſwer: Do not let this lead thee aſtray; doſt thou not know how that it is written: "The "juſt man falleth ſeven times, and riſeth up again;" and doſt thou think to ſtand always? Yes; I aſſert and confeſs with thee, that it is thine own fault, that thou haſt brought it upon thyſelf, and well deſerved it; yet, nevertheleſs, it is better that thou ſhouldſt, with firm truſt, pray our kind God for His grace (who knows thy weakneſs, and is ready to forgive thy treſpaſſes ſeventy and ſeven times in a day), than that thou ſhouldſt thus drive thyſelf back in thy courſe with ſuch faintheartedneſs. O child, haſt thou fallen? ariſe, and go, with childlike truſt, to thy Father, like the prodigal

Matt. xxvii. 46.

How we muſt not be diſcouraged by the conſequences of our own tranſgreſſions, but ever preſs forward, and truſt in God.

Prov. xxiv. 16.

ſon, and humbly ſay, with heart and mouth: "Father, "I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and "am no more worthy to be called thy ſon; make me "as one of thy hired ſervants." And what will thy Heavenly Father do but what that father did in the parable? Aſſuredly He will not change His eſſence, which is love, for the ſake of thy miſdoings. Is it not His own precious treaſure, and a ſmall thing with Him to forgive thee thy treſpaſſes, if thou believe in Him? for His hand is not ſhortened that it cannot make thee fit to be ſaved. Therefore, beware of ſpiritual covetouſneſs; for the poorer thou art in thine own eyes when thou comeſt to Him, the more acceptable art thou in His ſight, and the more richly He will endow thee and clothe thee out of His treaſures.

Luke, xv. 18, 19.

Of ſpiritual pride, or a ſelf-juſtifying ſpirit.

Spiritual pride is when a man is not willing to be put to ſhame in his own eyes on account of his tranſgreſſions, but is ever trying to excuſe and gloſs over his faults, and is never willing to abaſe himſelf, even in ſmall matters. And this often leads people to make many uſeleſs and wrong ſpeeches in order to excuſe themſelves and to juſtify themſelves in every reſpect; as much as to ſay, I am not the man to be accuſed of this and that; and they are unwilling to remember, or conſider, that he who cannot clear himſelf with the ſimple truth will not be helped by the untruths by which he often adds to his guilt; and that a man who humbles himſelf before God is more in his eyes than an arrogant, ſelf-righteous man, who deems himſelf able to anſwer for all his deeds with his own righteouſneſs. Hearken, dear child; what does all

Is. lxiv. 6.

our righteouſneſs come to at laſt? Iſaiah ſays: "All "our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags;" and however great our righteouſneſs is, or might become, yet, if the Lord ſhould ſit in judgment on us, without doubt we ſhould have to confeſs ourſelves His debtors, and place all our hope in His mercy. Our Lord often diſciplines a man by his own failings, if he is humble under them and throws himſelf at God's feet; for God will have every knee to bend before Him, and will have the praiſe and glory of all goodneſs. Hence we may obſerve that there is often a ſecret pride within us from which many unſeemly fruits do grow. But he who gives diligence to beware of ſpiritual wantonneſs, covetouſneſs and pride, ſhall be kept from ſtraying out of God's ways, or falling into error in his inward exerciſes.

Three rules to avoid theſe three ſins. All ſeeming evil that makes us more like Chriſt is from God.

But in order to keep yourſelves from theſe ſins, and withſtand this kind of temptation, you muſt obſerve three rules which I will tell you. The firſt is: none of the inward difficulties that riſe up from within, or the adverſe circumſtances that ſtay our hands from working, by which we are drawn or preſſed into likeneſs and conformity to the humble image of Chriſt and His Saints (not alone outwardly, but that of their inward condition), can be the work either of evil ſpirits or of nature, but without a doubt come from God. For He is the Higheſt Good, and from the Higheſt Good nought but what is good can flow; and all the goodneſs that God gives us of His ſtores, and that we render back again to Him, has proceeded from Him as its ſource; juſt as all ſtreams flow back again to their ſource, the Ocean whence

they have ariſen, and all things do rejoice in their return. But all that draws us and leads us aſide from ſuch conformity and likeneſs proceeds without doubt from the Spirit of Evil, who is ever on the watch to diſturb and draw us down, as our Lord ſaid: "He "who is not with me is againſt me, and he who ga- "thereth not with me, ſcattereth." This rule is againſt the firſt ſpiritual vice, that of wantonneſs.

All that ſhows us our own poverty is of God.

The ſecond rule is: Whatever befalls a man inwardly, whereby he is brought to a cloſer and more ſenſible gathering up of all his affections and impulſes, in ſingleneſs of heart, into a ſteadfaſt truſt in and love of the Father's loving-kindneſs and not his own works and experiences, this is from God. And he who at all times ſees himſelf to be a poor beggar, however fair his works may ſeem, the more narrowly he looks into his own heart, and the more maſtery he gains over himſelf, the more does he diſcover his own nakedneſs of all virtue. He becomes aware in himſelf that he is nothing but an empty, worthleſs veſſel, fitted not unto honour but unto eternal deſtruction, which veſſel God alone muſt and will fill with His grace. When we cling to Him, ſuffer Him to have acceſs to our ſpirits, and do not defend ourſelves with ourſelves, that work is no doubt of God, by which a man is driven into himſelf to learn his own poverty. But the ſuggeſtions of the Enemy and of nature rob and deſpoil a man of all the benefits of his virtues; and this is the caſe whenever a man does not know his own real ſtate, and thinks to poſſeſs what he never had, and ſays (as it is written): "I am rich, and increaſed with goods, "and have need of nothing," and knows not that he

Rev. iii. 17.

" is wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and " naked." This is the rule againſt ſpiritual covetouſneſs.

All that brings us to ſubmiſſion is of God.

The third rule is: Whatever befalls a man by which he is leſſened and humbled in his own inmoſt emotions, and which makes him bend under the Almighty Hand of God, under all creatures, abaſing and annihilating himſelf in true humility, this comes no doubt from God. For as Lucifer and his followers deſired to be great and lofty, and were therefore thruſt down from heaven, ſo are we led back again to heaven by ſelf-abaſement, as it was ſaid of the Kings of the Eaſt that they travelled back into their own land again by another way.

How that all beings, bad or good, ſeek to draw others into their own likeneſs.

Thus does every being do and teach according to that which is his eſſence, drawing into his own likeneſs all whom there are to draw, as far as in him lies. The Evil Spirit is puffed up in his own obſtinate conceit, and in the loftineſs of his pride is ſo hardened and unbending in his own ſtiff-necked will and purpoſe, that neither to win heaven nor for anything elſe, will he humble himſelf for one moment, ſo fixed is he in his evil mind. So likewiſe is it with all the proud who have learnt of him to truſt in their own underſtandings above all other men's opinion and reaſon; wherefore they fall into ſtrife and variance with their neighbours, which begets much trouble and diſquiet of heart, and hence ariſe many breaches of brotherly love. They will take reproof from none, and grow ſo hardened in their own obſtinate evil will, and ſet upon their purpoſes, that they raſhly dare to with-

ſtand all the admonitions of God and His friends, as the Jewiſh ſcribes and prieſts withſtood our bleſſed Lord; and of ſuch the prophet Iſaiah, ſpeaking in the perſon of Chriſt, complains: "I have ſpread out my "hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which "walketh in a way that was not good, after their "own thoughts." *Is. lxv. 2.*

Of the humility and glory of our Bleſſed Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

But our bleſſed Lord, on the contrary, is meek and humble, yea, He is himſelf the eſſence of humility, whereunto He is unceaſingly drawing all men whom there are to draw, and who are willing to be drawn. His Being is the cauſe, the eſſence, and the origin of all things. He is the life of the living, the reſurrection of the dead, the reſtorer of all deformity and unfitneſs, and of thoſe who have corrupted and deſpoiled themſelves through ſin. He calleth back thoſe who have fallen away and wandered from His fold. He raiſeth up and confirmeth thoſe who are in temptation. He is the bulwark of those who ſtand, the awakener and guide of all who are looking and ſtriving upwards towards Him, the ſource of all light, the lamp of all who walk in light, the revealer of myſteries, in ſo far as it is fitting for us to know, and the beginning of all beginnings. His Eſſence is incomprehenſible, unſpeakable, and without a name. Therefore ſhould we honour and glorify His unſpeakable myſtery with holy reverence and ſilence, and nevermore covet to fathom or to taſte aught except in ſo far as is to His honour and to our profit, but ever with fit reverence and devoutneſs turn with all our might in ſhamefaced awe to contemplate the radiance of His bright and ſpotleſs mirror. It be-

hoves man to be ever in fear and to bethink him of the word that God, our Lord, ſpake by the mouth of Moſes: "If a man or a beaſt touch the mountain, "he ſhall be ſtoned;" which ſignifies that our animal ſenſes muſt not preſume to climb the Mount of the Divine Eſſence, but muſt rather keep themſelves below and take the meaneſt place, until the time come when it ſhall be ſaid unto man: "Friend, come up higher." And then he ſhall not go up of himſelf, but he ſhall ſuffer himſelf to be led upwards, and his ſenſual nature ſhall be purified and endowed with the light of God, whereby he ſhall receive more light than he could ever win by all his great and ſtrenuous labour. For the Divine Nature of Chriſt is a magnet that draws unto itſelf all ſpirits and hearts that bear its likeneſs, and daily unites them to itſelf through love.

How we muſt not aſpire to high things till called thereto of God.

Now Richardus ſays: "I receive Chriſt not alone on "the croſs, but alſo in His transfiguration on Mount "Tabor. But I may not receive Him there except I "find James, Peter and John, Moſes and Elias with "Him, who bear witneſs to me that it is truly Chriſt." That is to ſay: in all our diſtreſſes, in all our painful inward deſtitution, we may boldly believe that Chriſt is preſent with us; but if He appears to us on the Mount of inward Contemplation, we need theſe witneſſes that we may not enjoy the fruition of His gifts in a wanton ſpirit for the ſatiſfaction of our own deſires, nor too ardently covet more of His good gifts than we can put to a good uſe; but may ever abaſe ourſelves ſo thoroughly that we fall not into any ſpiritual pride. Theſe are the true witneſſes that we

Of receiving Chriſt in His tranſfiguration.